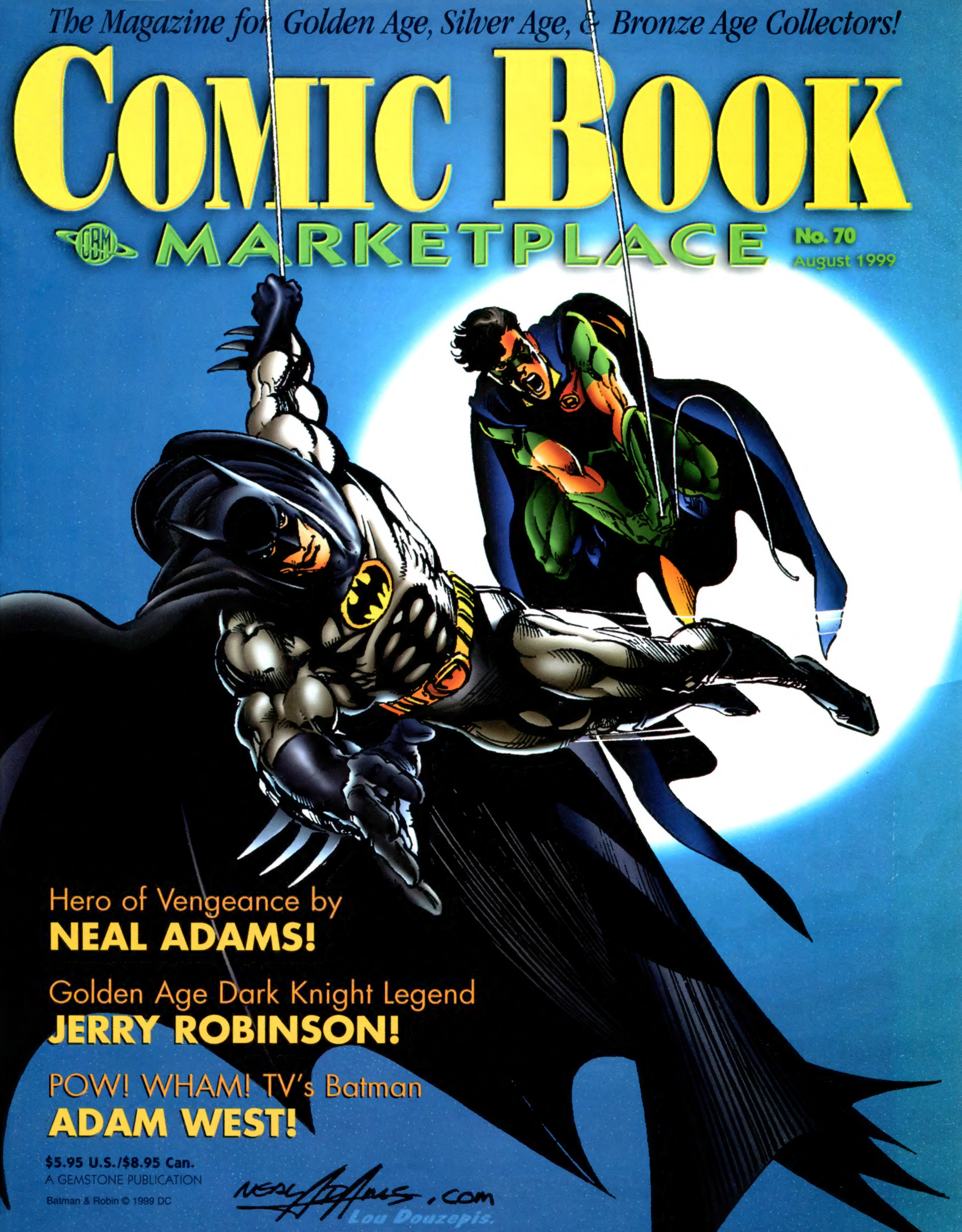
The Magazine for Golden Age, Silver Age, & Bronze Age Collectors!

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 70
August 1999



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August 1999

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NEAL ADAMS
Action #466
DC 1978 Calendar Cover - Disasters
ROSS ANDRU
Superman 349
JIM APARO
Adventure 452 (Aquaman)
Aquaman #62, 63
Batman #294
Brave & Bold #130, 136, 139
Manbat #2
Showcase #94,95,96 (Doom Patrol)
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All Star Comics #69
Astonishing Tales #26, 27 (Deathlok)
DC Super Stars #10 (Strange Sports)
Freedom Fighters #9, 10, 14
Iron Man Annual #3
Justice League #148, 158
Kamandi #47, 50, 52, 56, 60
Secret Society Super Villians 6-8, 11-15
Secret Society Super Villains Spectacular (DC Special Series #6)
Superman #327
Super Team Family #8 (Challengers)
New Gods #14, 15
Teen Titans (Old) #50-53
X-Men #97
BOB BUDIANSKY
X-Men #120
JOHN BUSCEMA
Thor #262
SAL BUSCEMA
Hulk #207 *(Interior Pages)*
What If? #13
JOHN BYRNE
****Avengers #181 *(Interiors)*, 186-190
****(no one will pay more for Byrne Avengers covers/ interiors)
Capt. America #248
Champions #11 *(Pages 1-3)*
#12 *(Pages 2-3)*
Fantastic Four (ANY covers #211-267!)
Iron Man #109
Marvel Team-Up (ANY covers!)
Marvel 2-in-1 (ANY covers!)
Ints. #53-58
Secret Origins Annual #1 (Doom Patrol)
Spec. Spider-Man #17
Super Villian Team #Up #14
X-Men #108-142 (covers & *interiors*)
ERNIE CHAN (CHUA)
Batman #282
Champions #17
DC Super Stars #8 (of Space), 9 (Man Behind the Gun)
Flash #243
Invaders #29
Justice League #132
Kamandi #45, 48, 49
Secret Society Super Villains 1-5
Teen Titans (Old) #44
DAVE COCKRUM
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Hulk #207
Human Fly #3
Iron Man #110
Star Wars #17
Super Villian Team-Up #12
X-Men - G.S. #1, 94- 126, 145-147 (ANY covers/pages)
GENE COLAN
Tomb of Dracula #62-64
What if #17 (Old) (Ghost Rider, Capt. Marvel, Spiderwoman)
DICK DILLIN
DC presents #13, 14
DC Superstars #10 (Strange Sports) *(Interior Pages)*
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Shade #3, 7
KIETH GIFFEN
Defenders #44 (Interior Pages)
DICK GIORDANO
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Superboy & Legion #253
MIKE GOLDEN
Micronauts #2-17
MIKE GRELL
Green Lantern #92, 100
Superboy + Legion #228, 230, 231
BOB HALL
Human Fly #17
Super Villian Team #Up #14 (*Interior pages*)
RICK HOBERG
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CARMINE INFANTINO
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GIL KANE
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Capt. America #216
Champions #11, 16
Jungle Action (Black Panther) #14
Star Wars #8
MIKE KALUTA
Batman Family #17
JACK KIRBY
Capt. America #202 (cover + *page 14*)
Defenders #44
Fantastic Four - 190
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Kamandi (ANY cover!)
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ALAN KUPPERBERG
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Untold Legend of Batman #2
PABLO MARCOS
Marvel Two In One #39
BOB McLEOD
Marvel Team #Up #86
AL MILGROM
All Star comics #70
Amazing Spiderman #194
Capt. Marvel #47
Defenders #74
Firestorm (Old) #2, 3
Flash #268
Invaders #41
Kamandi #53-55
Secret Society Super Villians #10
Shogun Warriors (ANY covers!)
Skull the Slayer #1
FRANK MILLER
Daredevil #158-181 *covers and splashes!*
Dark Knight (ANY pages)
X-Men Annual #3
MIKE NASSER
Kobra #6, 7
Spectacular Spiderman #37
DON NEWTON
Avengers Annual #9
New Gods #12 (Splash Page)
GEORGE PEREZ
****Avengers #160-168, 170-174, 181, 183-185, 191, 192, 194-201
Avengers Annual #8 (Especially #161,181), *Interiors wanted #167,*
Korvac TPBK cover
****(No one will pay/trade more for Perez Avengers covers!)
Batman/Outsiders #5,
Fantastic 4 (ANY cover!)
Infinity Gauntlet (ANY cover!)
Justice League #195 (cover & *centerfold*), 196, 197, 207, 209, 219, 220 (Any other covers considered)
Marvel Fanfare #10-12
Marvel Premiere #45-46 (Manwolf)
Marvel 2 In 1 #42, 50, 51, 57, 58, 61-63 *(Interiors #53-58)*
New Teen Titans #1-50
Annual #3,
New Titans (Baxter) #1-5,
War of the Gods #1,
X-Men #112, Annual #3 *(Interior Pages)*
Also looking for "odd-ball" titles Perez did from 1975-1987.
KEITH POLLARD
Iron Man #108, 111, 112
Marvel Two In One #55
FRANK ROBBINS
Human Fly #10
JOHN ROMITA JR.
Avengers #176
Defenders #62
Iron Man #114-117
ALEX ROSS
Marvels #0-4 (any splashes or nice panel pages)
Kingdom Come (various pages)
K. SCHAFFENBERGER
Action #474
MARSHALL ROGERS
Mr. Miracle (DC House ad page, 1977), 19-25
ALEX SCHOMBURG
Invaders annual #1 (also Human Torch pages)
JOE STATON
All Star Comics #71-73 "DC Explosion" (DC House ad pg 1978)
New Gods #19
Showcase #97, 99 (Power Girl) (*Splash to #94*)
Superboy + Legion #249
HERB TRIMPE
Godzilla #3
DAVE WENZEL
Avengers #177 (Interiors)
ALAN WEISS
Human Fly #7
Shazam (1977) #34
WALLY WOOD
All Star Comics #64
RON WILSON
Marvel Two in One #16, 37, 40
ARTISTS UNKNOWN
Marvel Spotlight #12 (Son of Satan)
Squadron Supreme #1-12
Super Villian Team-Up #15 (Doom Red Skull)

Hulk #207

Godzilla #3

Super Villains #8

Superboy/Legion #228

Kamandi #55

Justice League #195

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SEE MY OTHER ADS ON PAGES 178-179

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Patrick McDonnell (Mutts)
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Volume 2 • Number 70
August 1999
A Gemstone Publication

BATMAN, ROBIN © 1999 DC COMICS (© APPLICABLE THROUGHOUT MAGAZINE)

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Low Point in Bat-History?

A lot to discuss this issue, so here goes.... While chatting with *CBM* Copy Editor **Beth Holley** (who is also Vice President of exhibits for the San Diego Con) she informed me that 1999 San Diego Con guest and dealer registration is so strong that this year's attendance has every indication of breaking all previous records! And that's saying something for the largest and longest-running con in fandom history. If you've never been to San Diego, don't miss what is shaping up to be THE collector event of the century! Start makin' those plans today!

➤ I'm happy to announce that **Jerry Robinson** is the winner of this year's American Association of Comicbook Collectors' Hall-of-Fame award, guest-of-honor at this year's AACC Banquet, and winner of *CBM*'s 1999 Life Achievement Award! After you read our exclusive interview with him, I think you'll agree no one deserves it more... especially because of his contributions to the comic book industry, humanitarian and creator rights efforts, and illustrative excellence.

➤ This issue, **Neal Adams** was nice enough to drop by and share some fond memories of his most memorable Batman tale... a Caped Crusader yarn which he has not seen since he was a kid, yet still vividly remembers. (Just goes to show what a deep impression these stories made on all of us when we were kids.) Michelle Nolan did some research and found a story entitled "The Olympic Games of Crime" from *Batman* #82 (check out the splash on page 33), the plot of which closely matches Neal's recollections. Michelle and I both think it's just gotta be the "lost" story to which Neal refers.

➤ Ever since the color section in our Superman celebration issue (#63) was published, *CBM* readers have been requesting that Batman also get "the **Arlen Schumer** treatment." (As many *CBM*ers already know, Arlen and his talented wife & partner, Sherri Wolfgang, run the The Dynamic Duo Studio in Westport, CT.) Back in 1997 Arlen designed and Sherri colored a series of ten 55" x 27" exhibition panels entitled "The Graphic History of Batman." They appear in print form (along with a newly-designed 11th panel) in this issue of *CBM* for the first time anywhere!

But "The Graphic History of Batman" posed a real dilemma... should the size of the art be reduced so that it would all fit in the color section (affecting the readability of the type), or should it be printed in a larger format thus pushing a good portion of it on to follow-on black & white pages. I chose the first option (call me weak... I love color) so please forgive the small size of the writing.

➤ Finally, I want to put in a good word for the sci fi/fantasy era of **Batman**. (See 18 of my favorites in color on this issue's back covers.) Many historians "knock" the late '50s and early '60s as a low point in Batman history. I couldn't disagree more. The Batman of this era (and my childhood) was simply a reflection of the times. Sputnik, the space race, UFO sightings, and those great bug-eyed-monster movies all brought science fiction and fantasy to the forefront of American culture, and Batman stories just went along for the ride. (And we kids loved 'em!) I'm proud to say that far-fetched yarns like "The Rainbow Creature!," "The Mystery Seeds From Space!," and many others published from 1955-63 are, and will continue to be, among my all time and most fondly remembered favorites... primarily because of their science fiction and fantasy content!

As a loyal fan and avid collector of Batman for the last 40 years, I'm intrigued by all eras of the Caped Crusader's interesting and varied history. That's because, after six phenomenal decades, the character of Batman remains one of the most enduring, entertaining, and important creations ... not just in comics... but in all of literature! (Heck, every kid from Kenosha to Katmandu knows the legend of Batman!)

May you fill the Bat-holes on your *World's Finest, Star Spangled, Detective,* and *Batman* want lists!

Gary

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Consistency not nomenclature

The grading of comic books is as contentious a topic as ever (per the first two letters in CBM #66). As you mention, your opinion on split grading has been well documented, but until now I was unaware that you were a co-creator of the 100 point grading scale. If you find it unproblematic to gauge 83 grades in-between a Mint 99 and a Good 15, then I can only surmise that your objection to split grades and, apparently now, minus grades, is one of nomenclature, and not a dismissal of the notion that one can fine tune the grading system beyond the five basic grades. Perhaps a ten point system will simplify the grading process and alleviate the opposition to split grades, but if the 10 point scale proposed by Metropolis is any indication, I doubt it. This appears to be nothing more than the assigning of numbers to their existing 23 grades. If we start using decimals in a 10 point scale, then we might as well stick with the 100 point scale.

I think most collectors and dealers are pretty comfortable with some variation of the GD/VG/FN/VF/NM/MT grading scale. Let's face it, the 100 point scale never really caught on. No refinement in the grading scale is going to eliminate the subjective opinion we all bring to the grading of a given comic. Accurate grading is most important when ordering books one hasn't had a chance to see firsthand. Here, the issue is one of consistency and tightness of grading by the dealing community, and not of the nomenclature they use. Collectors should not be hesitant to ask for a rebate on, or to return a book they feel has been more than slightly overgraded, and through experience will be able to judge which dealers they find to be generally less strict than themselves.

A final comment on split grading; the idea that the absence of split grades would prompt dealers to downgrade a VG/FN to VG+, based on the conceit that if it doesn't reach Fine then it is by definition VG, could be turned around to the dealers' greater financial advantage, if it's better

Some Back Issues are still available...

#44 Wally Wood, Amaz. Fantasy #16
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#57 Legion of Super-Heroes, Curt Swan!
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than VG, then it must be Fine.

Whatever grading system becomes the standard for the next century, I hope that CBM remains the forum for its debate. Thank you.

Richard Byard, California

Another Wally Wood?

If there is a magazine dedicated to comic books that is as informative and entertaining as CBM, I sure can't find it.

The only gripe I can advance is having to wait so long between issues. If necessary, raise the price of the magazine again. I'm sure your readers would be happy to shell out a few more dollars each month if it would get CBM into their hands on time. I know I'd be happy to pay more for the wealth of knowledge CBM provides.

On another topic, I've enclosed for your perusal the cover of Puss In Boots, a children's book (picture and text) published by Saalfield Pub. Co. in 1937. The cover is signed Wally Wood. I think the inking style is very distinctive and quite good.

The problem is that Wally Wood, the great comic book artist, was born in 1927. Does anyone have any information about another graphic artist named Wally Wood? Thanks.

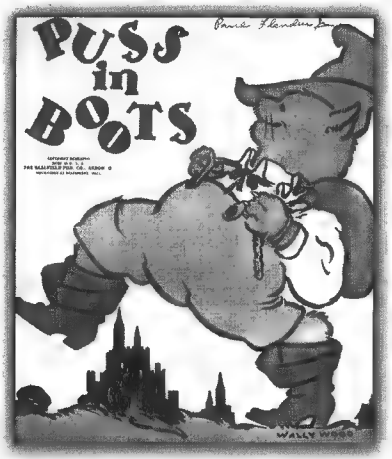
Ed Baldwin, Virginia

Jane Fonda made me do it

During my long if not particularly distinguished writing career, I don't know if I've ever managed to get a more egregious error into print than my identifying "Ted Turner" as Wildcat's secret identity in the list of JSA members accompanying my piece on All-Star Comics in CBM #69. I hereby offer the following excuses. Choose your favorite:

1. It's recently been revealed that Ted Grant has nine lives. In one of them, he used the name Ted Turner. 2. Some days it doesn't pay to get out of bed. 3. Where's my editor when I really need him? 4. It was all a joke to see if anybody was paying attention. 5. I'm not always as smart as I think I am. Apologies all 'round.

Jack Curtin, Pennsylvania



McClure McCorrections

My article about DC giants published in CBM #69 had a few errors that slipped by, and I'd like to correct them. Binky #82 (Summer 1977) is NOT a giant. Also, the listing of 80 page giants published from March 1977 to October 1978 had some typos. House of Mystery should have read #251-59 (3/77 - 7-8/78), Superman Family should have read #182-90 (4-5/77 - 7-8/78), and World's Finest should have read #244-52 (4-5/77 - 8-9/78). Thanks

Jon McClure, Oregon

First & foremost

First of all I would like to thank you for your magazine, I really do enjoy it and it has much more to offer the Golden Age and Silver Age collector than any other magazine.

I think it is great that you can speak your mind in your publication, but the opinion of Craig Rader in #66 is way off. I am mainly a collector but like most collectors I dabble as a dealer so I can afford to add to my collection without putting a huge dent in my budget, so I do have some experience in retail of comics.

First the idea of buying comic books as an investment is OK but you have to do it out of love for the medium not to invest to obtain a financial goal, if you want to do that put your money into a 401k, 403b or a Roth IRA… not buy comic books.

The ability to sell some books at Guide requires a great deal of time and patience while others go quickly at over Guide prices. The reason for that is simple… SUPPLY AND DEMAND. That has always been the way in retail and always will be the way. So the idea of comics not going down in price at any grade seems silly.

According to Mr. Rader the book in high grade should not go down in value even if there is no demand for the book at Guide prices. That could only happen in one of two ways, the dealer chooses not to discount the book even though it won't sell (which if they did they would be out of business or if they weren't why would they buy your book if they can't sell their copy), or they could discount it and then lie to the Overstreet people about how much they sell it for. Either case does not appeal to me. I can only speak for myself and a few fellow collectors I know that we first and foremost collect because we love

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comic books. Yes, we would like to find a collection of pedigree books like the Mile High collection and make a fortune, but we are in this hobby because we love comic books. Period.

If anyone is in this hobby only to increase his portfolio, I feel sorry for him because obviously they no longer have a passion for comics… just possessions (or the value of such).

Jim Broughton, Ohio

Mishmash in the Marketplace Mail

Just finished CBM #66. I would like to react to Craig Rader's Speak Out! Forum. Craig, you should realize that the Overstreet Guide does not make the prices of comics. It just reflects what the offer and demand are. Just the same as the Wall Street stock exchange does. Why do you think the Asian markets collapsed a while back ? Because "steady, stable growth" had been forced upon them for too long, that's why. One day, reality takes its toll.

Your books have absolutely no value as long as you do not try to sell them. If you do try, though, they are worth exactly what somebody is willing to pay for them at that precise moment, given his budget and the appeal of the books, nothing more, nothing less. Not what a guide says it's worth. I hope everyone will stop expecting to impose artificial price-calculation processes over the market.. This is a capitalist marketplace here, my boy, not the Soviet Union. All this mishmash in the Marketplace Mail about adversary grading systems seems so pointless to me. You know what ? See a book, decide what you're willing to spend on it. If it matches the seller's point of view, it's done for. Otherwise, you've just saved money, is all. Quite simple indeed. Apart from that, great issue. I didn't remember there were so many femme fatales in the Spirit series. The gallery of portraits was good enough to show these gals aren't all look-alike clones.

The MAD magazine/Kelly Freas spotlight was great, too. Bonjour chez vous

J.C. Lebourdais, St. Joachim, France

Do away with VF

First, great mag. Keep up the good work.

Second, on grading: There's no difference between a 100-point system and a 10-point system that goes to one decimal place. 100 = 10.0; 99 = 9.9; 78 = 7.8; etc. What would be the point to this change? A 10-point system that did not allow for decimals, however, would be a significant change.

I think the VF grade should be done away with completely. NM is not "perfect"; there should be enough room in that grade to include at least what is considered the upper end of VF. (I would be happy with a system that graded as NM any comic that appeared to be fresh off the rack without significant "dings.") On the other hand, I believe that VG is a valid grade. Without VG, GD and FN each would be too broad to be useful.

Third, on "Ages": I consider Conan #1 to be the first Bronze Age comic because it is the first significant non-superhero comic since the superhero revival started in Showcase #4. House of Secrets #92 lacks significance because it was intended as a throwaway or one-shot, whereas Conan was planned as a series.

The start of the Modern Age is harder to pin down. I believe that a major event signaling the transition between the Bronze and Modern Ages was the demise of the writer-editors at Marvel (and their subsequent move to DC) that accompanied the rise in power of Jim Shooter. Thus, I consider X-Men #137 to be the first Modern Age comic. It was in connection with the death of Jean Grey that Shooter *(Continued on page 72)*

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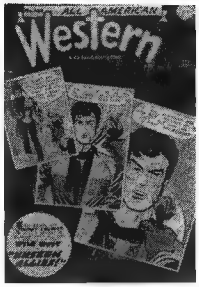

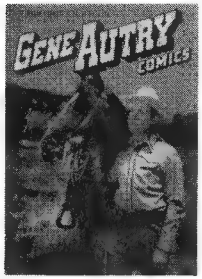

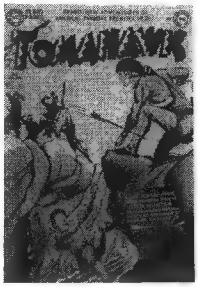

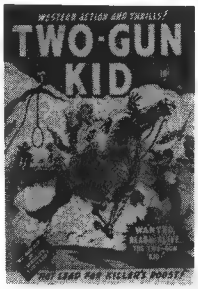

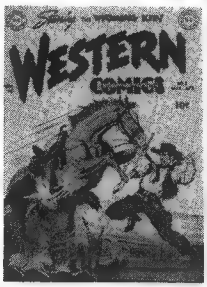

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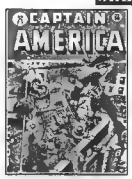
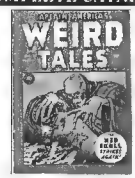


TIM Captain America Comics 58
Oversteet Copy / Schomburg-c
FN/VF 7.3 (4.0) $475



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NEDOr Fighting Yank 18
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By Pat S. Calhoun

Strange Brood

The early 1950s were banner years for fantasy comics, and as they proliferated the competition for titles became fierce. Thus a key word like "strange" would spawn a host of variant titles: *Strange Worlds, Strange Fantasy, Strange Terrors*, etc. Our featured books represent the three most successful—rated by longevity—of the strange brood. Fortunately, strange was not one of the title words banned by the Comics Code Authority for the industry clean-up of 1955, otherwise none of them would have had a chance to endure. These three issues all hail from 1952, the year that fantasy became the best-selling comics genre.

Strange Adventures was the first entry and went on to claim top honors with a 23-year 244 issue run. It was DC's first science fiction comic and a pioneer title in the genre. The mag was co-edited by Julius Scwartz and Jack Schiff, but Julie soon took over and made it special with his knowledge and love of SF and his literary agent relationship with many fine SF writers. Edmond Hamilton and Gardner Fox—whose names had graced hundreds of fantasy pulps—were the most frequent contributors

Strange Adventures #23 (August) comes packaged with a smoothly appealing Murphy Anderson cover. Part of Murphy's mastery of SF imagery was his long education as an SF pulp addict; he knows that BEMs (bug-eyed-monsters) and femmes are a sure mix.

The first story inside tells of a prehistoric Earth ruled by giant ants and how one ant scientist postulates that the tiny humans (that ruin their picnics) are plotting to take over the world. The humans do stage a revolt, but the ants launch a rocket full of eggs to orbit for 10,000 years in suspended animation then land and hatch. Cosmic rays shrink the gi-ants to ant size, diminishing their destructive power, but still they are out there waging their war.... It's clever enough but bears the DC shortcomings of overcomplication and improbability.

"The Last Woman on Earth" is also somewhat contrived—with aliens sending Earth through a poisonous comet tail to kill off all the people so they can appropriate the planet. While this takes place a male scientist and his romantically inclined but unreciprocated female assistant are down in a bathysphere. After coming up and defeating the invaders advance party and thwarting the interplanetary occupation they vow to do the right thing and become a new "Adam and Eve."

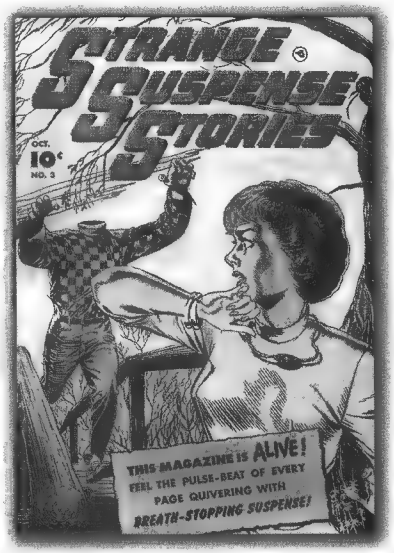
Then Gardner Fox and John Giunta team up on "The Ghost Planet," where an exploring Earthman finds out what made a planet's population disappear—finds out the hard way... Captain Comet wraps things up in "The Brain Pirates of Planet X," a reasonably well-crafted juvenile space opera. Even well before the Code DC aimed their books at a younger audience.

Strange Tales is often called the flagship of the Atlas fantasy line; it was their first fantasy title to continue through into the silver sixties. Issue #5 (February) contains four worthwhile stories. Hank Chapman wrote and Joe Maneely drew "The Room Without a Door," a predictable but pleasantly detailed yarn of a man who seeks magic, steals magic, and suffers magic.

Next up is the nicely imagined "The Little Man Who Was There," which begins during the Korean War when a Yankee soldier shares a trench with a unknown companion during a bomb attack. After the war—back home—he sees the man again and again, and each time it warns him of some imminent disaster. The plot zigs a good zag at the end, and Jim Mooney's art is attractive with a superb splash panel.

"The Trap" juggles time travel and murder in a psychodrama that works because the reader believes the character's motivations. "My Brother Harry" puts some good spin on the idea of a man who can see and hear ghosts that are undetected by other people. Harry's brother becomes annoyed at Harry's carrying on conversations with their dead mother and causes a scene which inspires his wife to a bold and decisive move that leaves him unseen and unheard—except by....

Atlas added five fantasy titles to their line-up in the first half of 1952, upping their output in the genre to a dozen mags that offered a wealth of weird fiction illustrated by an amazing variety of artists.


STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES
OCT. 10¢ NO. 3
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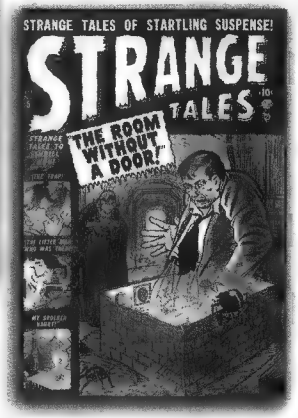
Artist George Evans created a perfect horror cover for Strange Suspense Stories #3 (Oct 1952)! Evans also drew the art for "Brother Volcano," the superbly illustrated lead story.

Strange Suspense Stories #3 (October) has a really good George Evans cover that is ghastly without being gross. Evans drew the lead story inside as well, "Brother Volcano," and all the lava, smoke, and flames make a visual feast. The ending is somewhat saccharine, but getting there is entertaining.

Murphy Anderson's cover for **Strange Adventures** #23 (Aug 1952) did an outstanding job enticing potential readers with sci-fi intrigue.

Although the fantasy cover of Strange Tales #5 (Feb 1952) is not fantastic... it does feature four enjoyable weird tales plus awesome Joe Maneely illustrations on "The Room Without a Door."



Fawcett's fantasy titles used a three-story format to advantage; the extra pages allowed the suspense to build... "Port of Terror" utilizes the cover concept of a headless body that "lives" on: Wolf Merique's machete attack decapitates a man who had caught him cheating at cards, and the "shortened" body haunts him—demanding Wolf's head as restitution. The finale is bizarre.

"Mirrors Tell Tales" is a straightforward story of a crook and murderer who thinks he's escaped the law after plastic surgery gives him a new face. But soon he starts to see his old self in the mirror, and all shiny surfaces threaten to unmask him. It's nothing too startling, but it moves along and packs some punch into the last panel.

When Fawcett stopped publishing comics they sold their horror titles to Charlton, who kept *Strange Suspense Stories* going (with a few short gaps) through 1969.

The strange titles made an immense contribution to the two decades that produced the vast majority of four-color fantasy comics.

Pat Calhoun has been collecting, researching and appreciating comic books since the early 1960s, and is a nationally recognized comic book historian. Originally a Coronadan, Pat and his family now reside in Santa Rosa.

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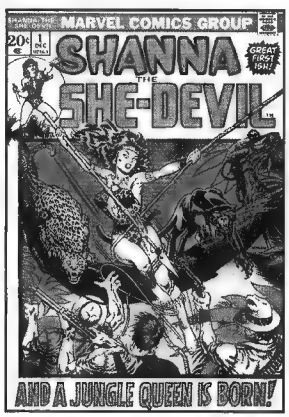

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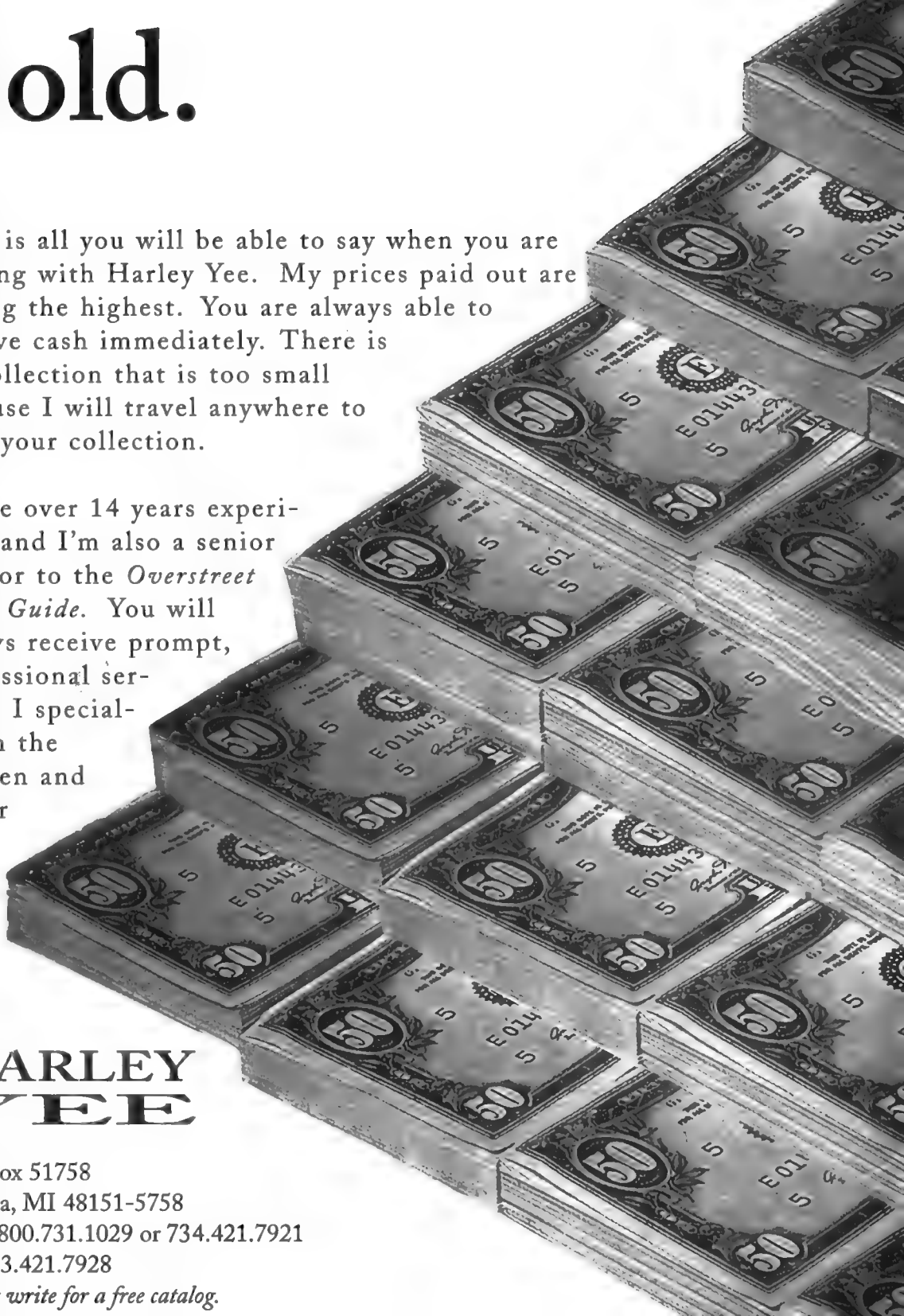

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By Michelle Nolan

Sheena and Her Sisters

Why Jungle Queens were made for the comics

Think about it for a moment: What type of 1940's and '50's comic book featured a genre seldom seen in other areas of popular culture?

Give up?

The answer: comics devoted to jungle queens, jungle girls, and jungle princesses.

But never, it must be noted, jungle women! Some things, apparently, were just too intimidating for the imagination of a large part of the reading public.

Jungle heroines had been largely forgotten for 20 years by the late 1970s, when a group of dealers and collectors began referring to little-known post-WWII comics with "good girl art" (soon to become known as GGA). Many of these comics, of course, contained the escapades of the jungle girls.

However, the fact is that by the mid-'70s, the original jungle queens had all but vanished from the public mind for more than two decades. But that was not surprising. After all, the last issues of the original generation of jungle comics—the *Lorna* and *Jann* titles from Atlas and *Nyoka* from Charlton—were published in 1957.

The female vine-swingers were simply not part of the imagination of the comic book-reading public during the Silver Age, notwithstanding a couple of short-lived attempts I loved—the five issue run of Carole Seuling's *Shanna the She Devil* from Marvel in 1972-73 and the seven-issue experiment with *Rima the Jungle Girl* from DC in 1974-75.

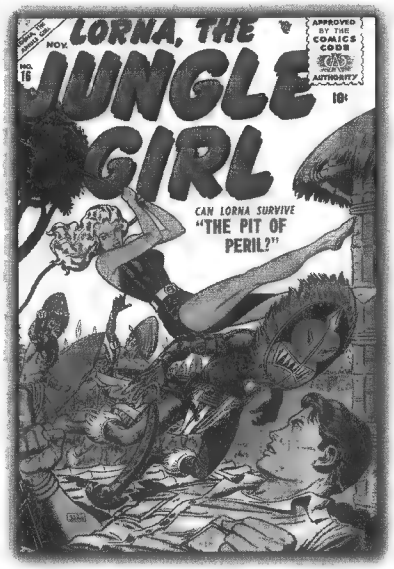
Then, too, during the 1960s, popular culture was no longer offering the other primary outlet for tales of jungle heroines—movie serials! Serials of any kind were last produced in 1956 and had vanished from most theaters a year or two later, even in re-releases.

Likewise, the only jungle heroine ever to make her mark on television, Sheena, was limited to a 26-episode syndicated production in the mid-1950s. She vanished from the screen not long after the Queen of the Jungle's initial burst of TV popularity in 1955-56.

It's interesting to note that the Sheena television episodes carry the copyright of the "Real Adventures Publishing Co."—one of the many Fiction House sub-companies set up for tax purposes—even though the original version of the Queen of the Jungle last appeared in the comics in 1953 (*Jumbo Comics* #167, March 1953, the last issue) and last appeared in the pulps in 1954 (*Jungle Stories*, spring 1954, the last issue).

In other words, the television producers were filming a character who was no longer being published in the United States! Such was the lot of the poor jungle girl! It's no wonder the *Sheena* television series expired so quickly, even though six-foot Irish McCalla made a most physically impressive Sheena.

There were four well-known serials about jungle girls, all from Republic—*Jungle Girl* (1941), starring Frances Gifford, *Perils of Nyoka* (1942), starring Kay Aldridge; *The Tiger Woman* (1944), starring Linda Stirling; and *Panther Girl of the Kongo* (1955), starring Phyllis Coates. Two other serials about jungle femmes, *Queen of the Jungle* (1935) from an independent studio, and *Jungle Queen* (1945) from Universal, are almost totally forgotten today.



Lorna The Jungle Girl #16 (Nov 1955) featured a male-in-bondage cover months after the CCA... and just might be "pushing the envelope" more than any other 1950's post-Code cover!

Panther Girl of the Kongo (the title is often misspelled Congo, because that is the correct geographical spelling) is by far the weakest. It came at the end of Republic's two memorable decades of serial making, when production values had been dramatically diminished (pun fully intended). In spite of the reduction in production quality, *Panther Girl of the Kongo* had something special... Phyllis Coates! Coates, you may recall, was a first-rate screamer and a solid actress in her own right, and is most fondly remembered for her superb portrayal of Lois Lane in the first 26 episodes of the 1950's *Superman* TV show. (It's a little known fact that the budget of *Panther Girl of the Kongo* was so stingy that the studio had Coates wear the same

costume that Frances Gifford had worn 15 years earlier… so that stock footage could be recycled and less new footage had to be shot.)

The other three Republic jungle girl tales are all terrific serials, among the best ever made. Their successes—all were re-released several times—surely contributed to the post WWII growth in the popularity of jungle girls in the comics.

I have to admit a special bias for the 1941 *Jungle Girl* serial. The star, Frances Gifford, was my father's girlfriend in high school for a while in the mid-1930s! My father grew up near Hollywood and knew more than his share of celebrities before he went into the Navy in 1940. He became a Pearl Harbor survivor, having been transferred from the ill-fated Arizona to the Argonne only a couple of weeks before the attack. He lost more than two dozen buddies on the Arizona and often visited the memorial in Hawaii until he passed away in 1992.

Interestingly, my father never knew that Gifford played the *Jungle Girl* lead until I showed him a still from the serial about 30 years ago! He was in the Navy when Gifford played the part of the screen's first Nyoka in *Jungle Girl*, and it was her only serial role. She appeared in more than two dozen films but retired not long after suffering serious injuries in an auto accident in 1948.

Kay Aldridge and Linda Stirling also were effective jungle queens, although neither wore the type of sexy costumes made so notorious by Fiction House and Fox comics. Serials, after all, were made primarily for youngsters. It's interesting to note that serials rarely went "over the top" with regard to violence and sexual imagery the way so many pre-Comics Code comics did. But then, by the time the Comics Code came along in the mid-'50s, movies of all types had already been subjected to the censorship of the Hays Office for more than two decades!

On the whole, though, jungle girls played a minor role in serial history… and they were almost non-existent in pulp magazines.

In *The Hero Pulp Index* (1971) by Robert Weinberg and Lohr McKinstry, only one female character is listed among the 56 heroes indexed. And that heroine, Sheena, appeared in only two pulps—her own one-shot magazine in 1951 (three stories) and in the previously mentioned last issue of *Jungle Stories* (and that may have been done for copyright purposes).

The Hero Pulp Index did miss the few appearances of another exotic character—the Domino Lady—but the point is that heroines were seldom lead characters in pulp stories. Nor were jungle pulps common—Fiction House's *Jungle Stories* (59 issues from 1938-54) pretty much had the field to itself, although anthology pulps such as *Adventure* and *Argosy* published their share of jungle epics.

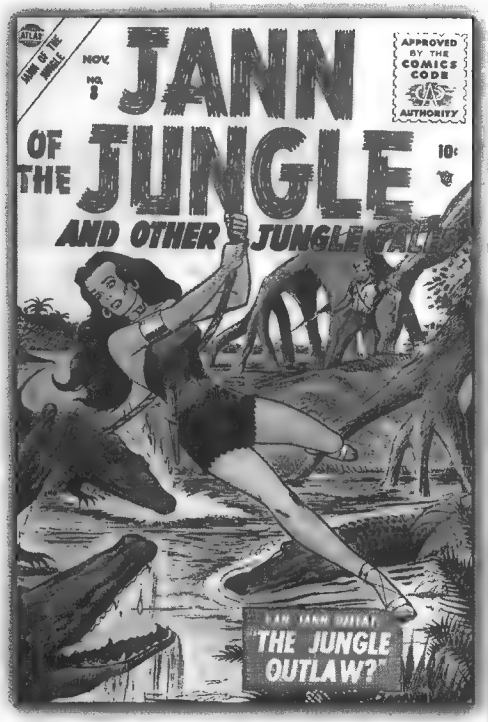
But comic books were another story when it came to jungle girls. In fact, they were a lot more common in the comics than in any other form of the media. At least 31 different jungle girls swung through comics in the 20 years after the debut of Sheena.

How many comic books of the 1938-57 period included at least one jungle girl story? By my count, at least 862! (This doesn't count comics with "jungle mates" of the men.) Even superheroines, such as Wonder Woman and Mary Marvel, did not appear in that many comics.

Bill Black's recently published *The Comic Book Jungle* (*Golden Age Greats Vol. 14* from Paragon Publications) provides an excellent overview of all the princes and princesses of the jungle, including special features on Sheena and Tarzan. Black has also published numerous original and reprint jungle girl stories over the years, keeping the genre alive. (Bravo Bill!)

Even though Nyoka appeared in nearly as many comics books as Sheena—and Nyoka's own title lasted far more issues—Sheena is the name that equates to "Jungle Queen" in the minds of most collectors.

Sheena appeared in no fewer than 188 Fiction House comics—*Jumbo* #1-167, *Sheena* #1-18 and the *Sheena* 3-D one-shot, *Jungle*



Atlas' Jann of the Jungle #8 (Nov 1955, the first issue of her own title) is pretty racy for the post-Code period.

The rare Sheena pulp (Spring 1951, one-shot) hit the stands just two years before Fiction House stopped publishing comic books altogether.

#158 and *Kaanga* #16. Because no complete story-by-story Fiction House index exists, I have no idea how many of those stories are reprints, but I suspect most of the stories in *Sheena* #1-18 are reprints.

Here's a historical note I'll bet most collectors may only realize subliminally: By the time Sheena made her last appearance on the cover of *Jumbo* with #160 (June 1952), the Queen of the Jungle had appeared on 144 consecutive covers—a streak that began with #17 (July 1940), which she shared with four other characters before embarking on solo covers for good.

That's 12 full years of Sheena cover appearances every month! At that point in June 1952, the only other characters with longer consecutive cover runs were Superman in *Action Comics*, Batman in *Detective Comics*, Captain Marvel in *Whiz Comics* and one other character—Sheena's Fiction House profits partner Kaanga in *Jungle Comics*. (*Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* with Donald Duck had reached 141 issues by June 1952).

How durable were *Sheena* and *Jumbo Comics*? In addition to the above five titles, by 1952 only a few other titles still existed that were being published in 1940—*Adventure, Batman, Comics on Parade, Famous Funnies, Fight, Master, Mutt & Jeff, Pep, Planet, Red Ryder, Sparkler, Superman, Tip Top,* and *Wings*. How about that, *CBM* readers… bet you didn't realize Sheena belongs in such exclusive company!

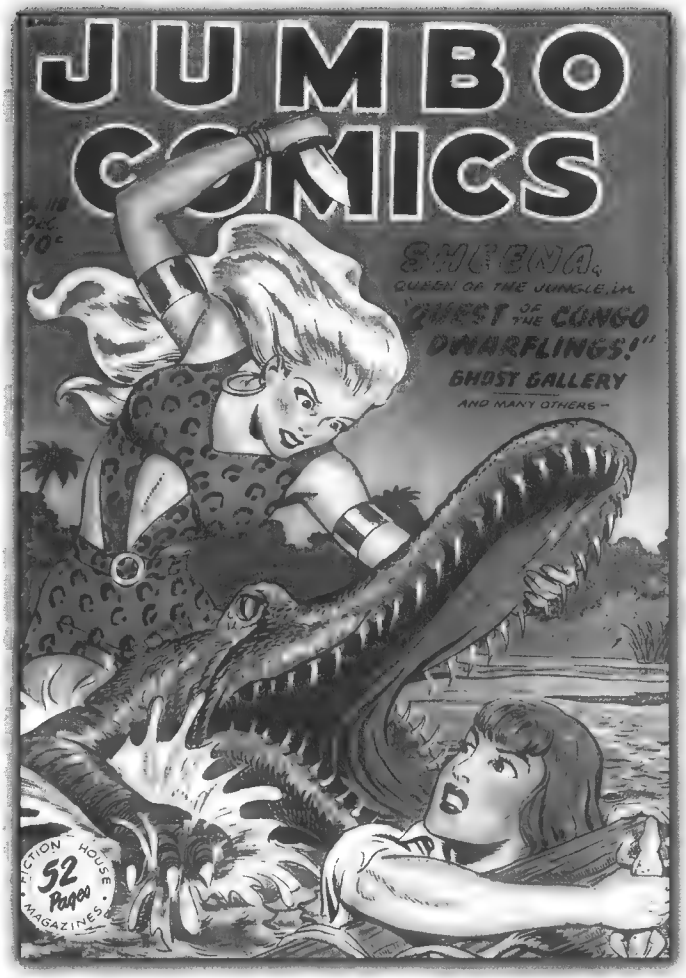
Even though Nyoka appeared in 77 issues of her own title from Fawcett and continued in 15 issues from Charlton (*Zoo Funnies* #8-13 and *Nyoka the Jungle Girl* #14-22), she takes a distant second to the much more flamboyantly costumed Sheena in the minds and hearts of collectors. Nyoka also ran in *Master Comics* #50-132 and was reprinted in Charlton's *Danger & Adventure* #22 and 23 for a grand total of 177 comic book appearances.

Nyoka's cover appearances in the 15 Charlton issues are noteworthy for the fact that she never looks the same twice! As I mentioned in a column some time back, on many of the covers she looks as though she just came back from washing a car! Charlton certainly didn't have to worry about the Comics Code when it came to its original versions of Nyoka (there were also some Fawcett reprints in the Charlton series).

Another long-running feature, Camilla in *Jungle Comics* #1-151 (except #117) along with *Jungle* #163 and *Kaanga* #15, appeared in 152 stories (again, I have no idea how many were reprints). Camilla, however, is not well remembered today because Kaanga and his female partner dominated the covers of *Jungle Comics* throughout its 163-issue run.

A fourth Fiction House jungle queen, Tiger Girl, also enjoyed a long run in *Fight* #32-81 (1944-52) before swinging over to *Jungle Comics* #152-163 (except #158, which featured Sheena). Tiger Girl's 61 appearances also make her a major figure among the jungle queens.

There were three other Fiction House jungle girls—Fantomah in *Jungle* #2-51, Kazanda in *Rangers* #23-28, and Jungle Girl in *Kaanga* #7-12—but they are largely forgotten today.



Besides being Michelle Nolan's all-time favorite Sheena cover… Jumbo Comics #118 (Dec 1948) is a classic pre-Code 52-pager featuring the unintentionally humorous classic "Quest for the Congo Dwarflings!"

On the other hand, the jungle heroines from Atlas are well-remembered even though they had shorter runs—in *Lorna the Jungle Queen/Girl* #1-26, Jann of the Jungle in *Jungle Tales* #1-7 and *Jann* #8-17 and Leopard Girl in *Jungle Action* #1-6. Altogether, there were 49 Atlas comics with jungle girls from 1953-57, and they were all distinctive productions.

In fact, the post-Code Atlas jungle girl issues are among some of the most intriguing of all comics published in the first few years of the post-Code period. The violence in the stories was toned down, of course, and the outright horror elements eliminated. Even so, they retained an "edge" that few other post-Code comics displayed.

Lorna the Jungle Queen debuted with #1 in July 1953, not long after Fiction House stopped publishing Sheena's adventures in both *Jumbo* and her own title. I can't help wondering if Stan Lee or someone else at Atlas figured there was a void, or if this was strictly a coincidence. Like Charlton's Nyoka of the same

period, Lorna looked at least slightly—and sometimes dramatically—different from cover to cover of her first 20 issues.

Leopard Girl was distinctive in that I believe she was the only one of comicdom's jungle girls to wear a full-body costume. Talk about impractical in the jungle heat! I think that ties Black Cat's high heels (and those of a few others) for the most impractical garb in comics.

Fox, of course, produced the largest number of jungle heroines, even though most of them are not well remembered. Fox's answer to Sheena and Rulah, who appeared in original stories in *All-Top* #8-18, *Zoot* #7-16 and *Rulah* #17-27—a total of 33 comics. Other Fox jungle heroines included Tangi, Tanee, Jungle Lil, Zegra (who started out as Tegra), Purple Tigress, Marga the Panther Woman, and Dorothy Lamour (the movie star who played several jungle roles).

One of the classic notes in the *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* concerns the two #7 issues of *Jo-Jo* (July and September 1947): The Jungle King's partner is "Gwenna, Geesa, Yolda and Safra before settling down on Tanee." One wonders about the editor of that series!

L.B. Cole's Star Publications acquired reprint or inventory rights to many of the Fox stories and published 13 issues of *Terrors of the Jungle* in 1952-54... #17-21 and #4-10 following a first issue entitled *Jungle Thrills* (#16). These featured reprints of Rulah & Tangi stories, often with different names for the characters. Interestingly, the covers made no reference to jungle heroines even though they were featured on the cover of every one—and every heroine had different costumes, hair, etc. on those wild L. B. Cole covers!

The jungle heroines of Standard/Nedor/Better Publications are well remembered because of the airbrush covers by Alex Schomburg (often signed Xela) featuring Princess Pantha on the covers of *Thrilling* #58-71 and Judy of the Jungle on *Exciting* #56-66. Those 25 covers are among the most sought-after of all Atom Age comics.

Jungle girls were featured in 55 Standard comics in all—Princess Pantha in *Thrilling* #56-74, Judy of the Jungle in *Exciting* #55-69, Tygra in *Startling* #45-53 and Kara, Jungle Empress in *Exciting* #39-49 and *Fighting Yank* #21. The stories and art varied wildly, but in general were several cuts below the Fiction House jungle girls, even though the covers were absolutely gorgeous.

It's interesting to note that those five companies (Fiction House and Fox/Star on the exploitive side... and Fawcett, Standard, and Atlas on the more demure side) produced almost all the jungle girl comics during the 1940s and '50s. Amazingly, many well-known companies of the era produced none at all... National, Dell, Gleason, ACG, and so forth.

ME (Magazine Enterprises) produced ten superb comics with Cave Girl stories—*Thunda* #2-6, *Cave Girl* #11-14, and the *Africa* one-shot—but Bill Black has chronicled those so well that there's no need to do that here. Suffice to say they are all beauties!

Little-known (but often highly collectible) jungle girl appearances include the *Saari* one-shot from PL Publishing; South Sea Girl in *Seven Seas Comics* #1-6 from Universal Phoenix (with three stories reprinted and censored in *Vooda* #20-22 from Ajax); the extremely primitive Jungle Queen in *Star Comics* Vol. 2 #7 from Centaur; Astron Crocodile Queen in *Doc Savage Comics* #5-20 (except #9 and 11) from Street & Smith; Blanda in *Miracle Comics* #1-3 from Hillman; White Princess of the *Jungle* #1-5 from Avon; Zara in *Mystic* #2 and 3 from Timely; and Jun-Gal in *Blazing Comics* #1-5 from Enwil.

The Matt Baker stories of Alani, the South Sea Girl are getting pretty pricey these days. But if you want a good inexpensive example, try to find the 1964 super reprint *Fantastic Adventures* #17, which reprints the South Sea Girl story from *Seven Seas* #6.

Collecting all of these jungle girl comics would be extremely difficult—I would be willing to bet no collector in the world has all 862!—but getting a few samples of each company and most of the characters is well within the reach of collectors.

Until next time, may all your landings be gentle after you go swinging through the comic book jungle!

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from '40s through the '60s. She has one of the most extensive collections of 1950's comic books in the US.

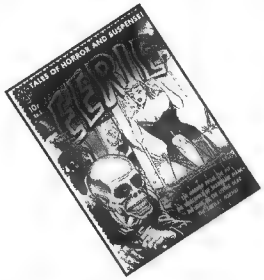
CHRONOLOGICAL 1ST APPEARANCES OF THE JUNGLE GIRLS

(Does not include Star or Ajax reprints)

Sheena - Jumbo Comics #1 (Sep 1938)
Jungle Queen - Star Comics V2#7 (Aug 1939, only app.)
Camilla - Jungle Comics #1 (Jan 1940)
Fantomah - Jungle Comics #2 (Feb 1940)
Marga the Panther Woman - Science Comics #1 (Feb 1940)
Blanda - Miracle Comics #1 (Feb 1940)
Zara - Mystic Comics #2 (Apr 1940)
Astron Crocodile Queen - Doc Savage Comics #5 (Aug 1941)
Nyoka - Jungle Girl (one-shot, 1942)
Tiger Girl - Fight Comics #32 (Jun 1944)
Jun-Gal - Blazing Comics #1 (Jun 1944)
Purple Tigress - All Good Comics (1944)
Kazanda - Rangers Comics #23 (Jun 1945)
Kara - Exciting Comics #39 (Jun 1945)
Alani (the South Sea Girl) - Seven Seas #1 (Apr 1946)
Princess Pantha - Thrilling Comics #56 (Oct 1946)
Judy of the Jungle - Exciting Comics #55 (May 1947)
Tygra - Startling Comics #45 (May 1947)
Rulah - Zoot Comics #7 (Jul 1947)
Tanee - Jo-Jo Comics #7 (Jul 1947)
Tangi - Dagar #14 (Feb. 1948)
Tegra/Zegra - Tegra #1 (Aug 1948)
Jungle Lil - Jungle Lil #1 (Apr 1950)
Dorothy Lamour - Dorothy Lamour #2 (Jun 1950)
Jungle Girl - Kaanga Comics #7 (Spring 1951)
Taanda - White Princess of the Jungle #1 (Jul 1951)
Saari - Saari #1 (Nov 1951)
Cave Girl - Thunda #2 (1952)
Lorna - Lorna the Jungle Queen #1 (Jul 1953)
Jann of the Jungle - Jungle Tales #1 (Sep 1954)
Leopard Girl - Jungle Action #1 (Oct 1954)

BEDROCK CITY
COMIC COMPANY

Golden Age
Silver Age
Atlas • EC • Horror
Fox • Avon • Sci-Fi
Romance • Good Girl
Western • Disney
Dell • Gold Key
Undergrounds
Alternatives
Small Press
Reprints



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Reflections from Jerry

A WILL MURRAY INTERVIEW

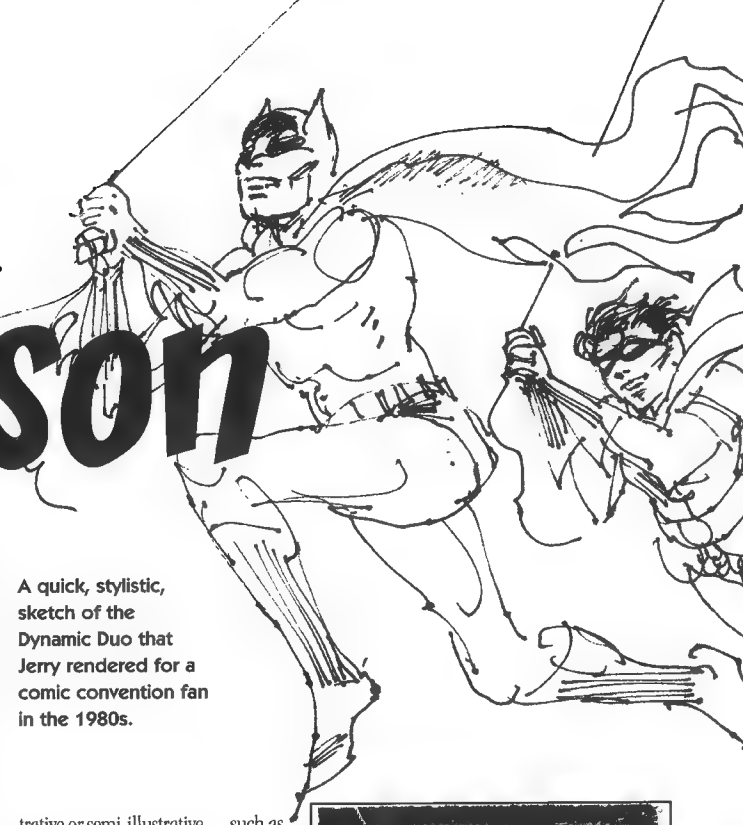
Batman legend Jerry Robinson

THE TALE OF HOW JERRY ROBINSON FELL INTO A CARTOONist's career is one of those serendipitous legends than can never be told enough. A 17-year-old aspiring journalism student, Robinson encountered 23-year-old Bob Kane at a resort during the fateful summer of 1939. A chance conversation led to Robinson becoming the first art assistant on Batman, who had yet to expand beyond the pages of *Detective Comics* into his own title. For the formative years of the character, Kane, Robinson, and writer Bill Finger formed the creative triumvirate that birthed all the major supporting characters and villains of the Batman strip.

That alone would make a career, but Robinson went on to become a successful comic book professional in his own right. Not content to remain in that field, he frequently sought out new challenges. For years, he illustrated books, as well as Broadway's *Playbill* magazine. His own book, *The Comics: An Illustrated History of Comic Strip Art*, is a classic. Over the years, he produced several successful newspaper syndicated features ranging from humor, "Flubs & Fluffs" to political-social satire, "life with robinson."

the Joker's eye...

Robinson



A quick, stylistic, sketch of the Dynamic Duo that Jerry rendered for a comic convention fan in the 1980s.

A champion of the comic art form, Robinson served as president of the National Cartoonists Society. As president of the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists, he successfully fought to obtain the release of a Uruguayan cartoonist who was a prisoner of conscience, Francesco Lorenzo Pons, whose political cartoons appeared in *Marcho* under the pen name, Paco. In this country, Robinson spearheaded, with Neal Adams, the long battle to obtain for the destitute Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster official recognition of their creation of Superman. Lifetime pensions and restored creator bylines were the result.

These days, when many cartoonists have long since retired, Robinson runs his own syndicate (the Cartoonist's & Writer's Syndicate) which specializes in the works of international newspaper cartoonists... a job which takes him all over the world. Nor is his comics career in the past. A character he created for a Science Fiction musical, *Astra: a comic book opera*, is being adapted in Japan in Manga form.

Over a half century has passed since the first Jerry Robinson-Bob Kane encounter that shook the comic book world. It's still shaking. In commemoration of six decades of the Caped Crusader, and of Robinson's return appearance at the San Diego Comic Con this summer, *Comic Book Marketplace* asked the prolific artist to reflect on his 60 years in comics.

WILL MURRAY: *I don't want to go into how you met Bob Kane, because you've told that story in every interview you've ever done.*

JERRY ROBINSON: Thanks a lot. (*Laughter*)

WM: (*Laughter*) *You're welcome. But Kane passed away last year and I wonder if you have any thoughts on your relationship with him in retrospect?*

JR: It might not have been realized from what has been written over the years, but my relationship with Bob personally was very good. I never had any disputes in the time I was with him. I always thought Bob did not get his real due as an early creator. He was very imaginative. He had a great flair. He had his own idiosyncratic style that was good.

When I first met Bob, he was doing comic cartoons. Not illustrative or semi-illustrative... such as Rusty and His Pals, Clip Carson, and Ginger. I did some of those in the beginning, before we concentrated on Batman. They're very cartoony. So he had to make a transition from the really comic art which accounted for some of the stylistic things he adapted. The fact that he wasn't really an experienced illustrator was great for Batman. Even the things that weren't drawn so well, in "normal" illustrative terms. It's much easier to go from an illustrative style to humor, than the other way round. And that's the bridge Bob had to make. So I give him credit for being able to make that jump.

Jerry Robinson's Variations On A Theme #39, a collage of early Batman themes adapted from early Detective & Batman covers.

WM: *What were your primary artistic influences?*

JR: I hadn't been trained as an artist. I had studied to be a journalist. People who influenced me were Hal Foster, Milton Caniff, and later Mort Meskin, who I worked with.

I was also influenced by the early films. Bill Finger became my cultural mentor and introduced me to French films, and German expressionist films. Those were very exciting to me and we introduced some of the effects and mood of those films into Batman.

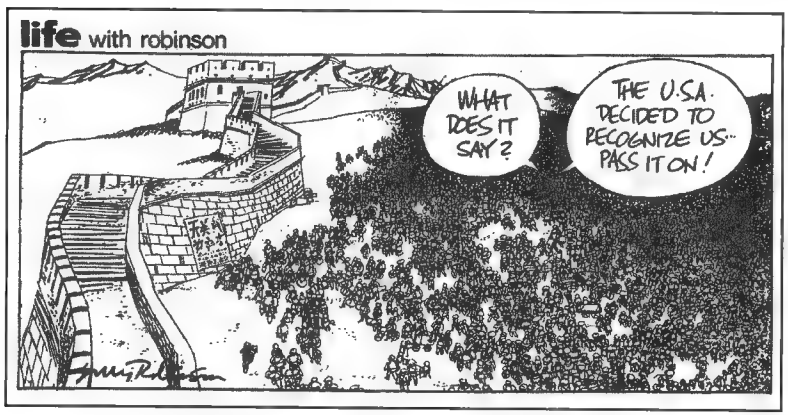
Jerry Robinson

WM: *Kane himself didn't like giving others credit because he was from the school that said, "I am the creator and everybody else is a ghost." What was the origin of the Joker?*

JR: Bill Finger was comics' best writer but he was not prolific; the writing didn't come easy. For *Batman* #1, we suddenly needed four stories in a very short time. So I volunteered to contribute a story and also use it for my Columbia creative writing class–and got paid for it!

That night, I was in a high state of excitement. For some time I had been thinking that we needed a more important adversary for Batman. The great heroes of literature had antagonists to pit themselves against. From David and Goliath, to mythology, to Sherlock Holmes and Moriarty, the heroes had formidable adversaries. Some said at that time, however, if you made the villain too strong it would overpower the hero. Villains *are* always much more interesting than the heroes. Heroes are dull because they have to be heroes.

The early Batman stories–as most stories of that time—reflected the previous era of the 1920s and '30s: the bootleggers, hijackers, bank robbers, etc. My favorite writers were de Maupassant and O. Henry. I visualized a memorable character—bizarre, with some contradiction in his nature. My affinity for humor led me to a villain with a sense of humor. The Joker name came from my love of cards—a family tradition; both my mother and brother were champion contract bridge players.



Jerry's version of the Golden Age Black Terror and a sample of his daily political satire strip life with robinson.

Late at night, I searched for a deck and, fortunately, found one with the classic clown Joker. That was just the kind of striking image I was looking for… the perfect visage for The Joker. And it combined the concept of the character… a bizarre villain… with a touch of humor.

When I began to sketch the character, I based the face on the playing card. The Joker's white face came from the white of the card together with the green hair and the flaming red lips. I gave no reason for The Joker's white face. It just added to the character's mystery. I always thought it was a mistake when (much later) they explained The Joker's origin and white face.

WM: *I was interested to read in an earlier interview with you that the original Robin was supposed to be more superheroic.*

JR: Well, while we were designing Robin we were brainstorming ideas… and of course I was working visually, as was Bob, doing sketches. Originally, they had envisioned more of a super character. Hence the names they were considering…

WM: *Do you recall any of them?*

JR: The only one that comes to mind was Mercury.

WM: *Finger said that Dusty and Scamp were others and that there was a long list of possible character names.*

JR: Yes, there was a list of maybe 30. And the things I was pitching for were not anything that inferred a supernatural or mythological association… because I thought that that was the antithesis of the character. Batman was not a superman, and we always wanted to make that distinction. We had all kinds of names on the table… and it was Robin that I suggested, based on Robin Hood.

WM: *Not on Robin the bird?*

JR: Not on Robin the bird. I know all kinds of versions of how Robin was named have come out.

In fact, some early articles even said that I named Robin after myself, which was silly, because at that age (17-18) I wouldn't have been so presumptuous. I knew N.C. Wyeth drawings of Robin Hood, so I sketched the traditional costume of Robin… and put the little "R" on it.

I had also been doing all the lettering and had been using the gimmick of putting the first letter of each caption in a circle, but dropping out the line. I thought the "R" on Robin's vest would be analogous to Batman's insignia. If you look at the rest of the costume, the little vest, 'chain-mail' pants, and the boots were à la Robin Hood.

WM: *Was there an intramural rivalry between the Superman and Batman camps at DC?*

JR: You might say that. We were very aware of Superman's success… but we always thought that Batman was the more enduring concept. Bob, Bill, and I thought that Superman, by having such super power, would be limited storywise. And it proved to be true because they did have to invent things that he was vulnerable to… Kryptonite and so forth. We thought we had the more human character and there was kind of an eter-

nal competition in that sense.

In the early days at DC, I met Siegel and Shuster. We worked at adjoining desks. We became close personal friends. So there was competition only in the terms of the characters. Not personally in any way. They were great guys.

WM: *Did you guys ever toss ideas at each other for the other characters?*

JR: No. We might have been influenced by one another. We worked on joint covers sometimes. Not with Joe directly, that I recall, but with Fred Ray, who did a lot of the great *Superman* and *World's Finest* covers… particularly the covers that involved both Superman and Batman. We would conceive the cover together. Fred would draw the Superman character and I would draw the Batman.

WM: *I understand Bob Kane offered you the art chores on the Batman newspaper strip, but you turned it down.*

JR: That's true. I could have worked on the strip, and I would have liked to, but I wanted to do my own work. There was more freedom on the comic books… I could pencil and ink my own stories. If I had done the strip, there would have been another combination of Bob and I. I would have liked the challenge of a newspaper strip.

I was also doing the covers, which I particularly enjoyed. I worked with Whit Ellsworth on that. He was a very good editor and gave me a lot of rein.

I did get the chance to do a daily and Sunday newspaper strip later on… a science fiction adventure, *Jet Scott*, for the New York Herald Tribune Syndicate.

WM: *People always ask you about the creation of the Joker and Robin, but you were around when the other major characters were conceived. Do you remember how Catwoman came to be?*

JR: I guess I remember Joker and Robin the best because I was more responsible for their inception. But most of the others were creations of either Bob and myself… or Bob and Bill… or the three of us all supplying ideas.

As for Catwoman, Bill was the one who had the original concept for her. Sometimes Bill would supply visuals to go with his ideas (as he did with Conrad Veidt). So, (I'm just theorizing now) it's likely he would have attached some scrap of paper to the script to help us with the visualization process… especially if the Catwoman was inspired by something or someone.

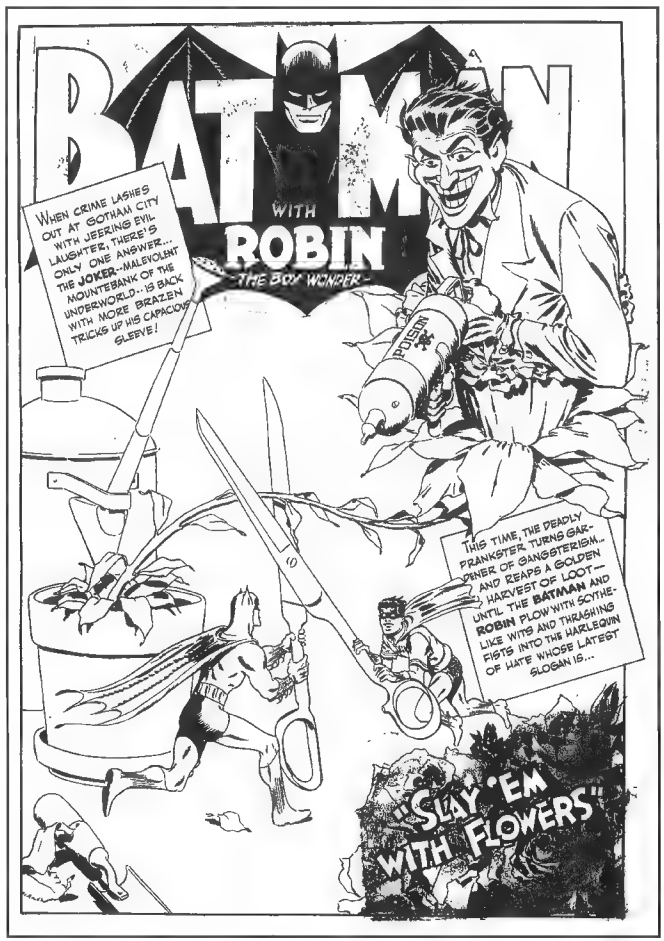
Another thought is that Bill knew all the pulps so they could have been an influence. Many of the early comic book writers came from the pulps.

WM: *Any memories of the Penguin's creation?*

JR: Yes… I remember the first drawings of the Penguin. In fact, I think I did the first Penguin covers. Later, of course, Penguin was refined somewhat. Bill certainly thought of the original concept for the character. Penguin was fun… we all really enjoyed developing him.

Jerry Robinson's original pen and ink art for the splash page in Detective #76 (Jun 1943).

Superbly composed third panel close-up from the Jerry Robinson-drawn crime story "When The Meuller Gang Struck" published during the 1950s.


BATMAN
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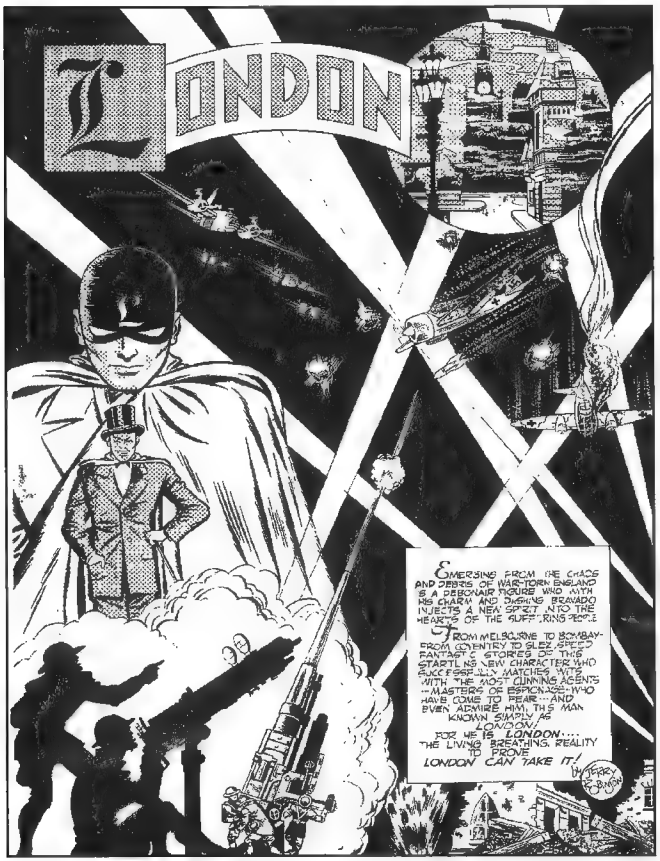
ROBIN
-THE BOY WONDER-
WHEN CRIME LASHES OUT AT GOTHAM CITY WITH JEERING EVIL LAUGHTER, THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER... THE JOKER--MALEVOLENT MOUNTEBANK OF THE UNDERWORLD--IS BACK WITH MORE BRAZEN TRICKS UP HIS CAPACIOUS SLEEVE!
THIS TIME, THE DEADLY PRANKSTER TURNS GARDENER OF GANGSTERISM.. AND REAPS A GOLDEN HARVEST OF LOOT— UNTIL THE BATMAN AND ROBIN PLOW WITH SCYTHE-LIKE WITS AND THRASHING FISTS INTO THE HARLEQUIN OF HATE WHOSE LATEST SLOGAN IS...
"SLAY 'EM WITH FLOWERS"

Jerry Robinson

WM: *I've heard two accounts of the Penguin's genesis. Kane said it was the Cool cigarettes cartoon Penguin that inspired him. Finger said it was a comical butler carrying an umbrella. What do you remember?*

JR: I do recall the association to umbrellas was a strong element in the character's concept. The Penguin reminds me of a couple of "rotund" characters... Tweedledee and Tweedledum... for which I did the visuals. I don't think they appeared more than a couple of times, however.


LONDON
EMERGING FROM THE CHAOS AND DEBRIS OF WAR-TORN ENGLAND IS A PERSONALITY FIGURE WHO WITH HIS CHARM AND DASHING BRAVADO INJECTS A NEW SPIRIT INTO THE HEARTS OF THE SUFFERING PEOPLE
FROM MELBOURNE TO BOMBAY-FROM COVENTRY TO SLEZ-SPEED FANTASTIC STORIES OF THIS STARTLING NEW CHARACTER WHO SUCCESSFULLY MATCHES WITS WITH THE MOST CUNNING AGENTS -MASTERS OF ESPIONAGE- WHO HAVE COME TO FEAR - AND EVEN ADMIRE HIM, THIS MAN KNOWN SIMPLY AS LONDON
FOR HE IS LONDON.... THE LIVING BREATHING REALITY TO PROVE LONDON CAN TAKE IT!
JERRY ROBINSON

1941 saw the publication of Robinson's historic "London." Inspired by the war news, from overseas, it was the first comic page he did under his own name.

WM: *They were out of Alice in Wonderland.*

JR: Right.

WM: *What kind of art breakdowns did Bob Kane provide?*

JR: In the beginning, they were fairly complete. Not in great detail. But as we went on and Bob had more confidence that I could finish them up, they got fairly rough. Particularly as we got more and more stories to do with the *Batman* quarterly. Finally, we added George Roussos to the staff as a background artist. I think George took over the lettering, too. George was a terrific background artist. It was a great compliment to the staff when he joined.

WM: *George loved to draw big moons.*

JR: (*Laughter*) Yeah and shadows, and whatnot. Well, we were trying to establish a "look." I think George followed what we were trying to do at that stage. Batman was so laden with backgrounds and we wanted everything authentic. George was great... he fell right in with the black and white style.

WM: *Neither you nor Kane were trained artists, yet some of those early Batman covers were very striking, and artistically very difficult to do. I'm thinking of the* Detective Comics *#40 cover with Robin dangling from a flagpole while Batman battles the Joker on a rooftop. Did you use still references?*

JR: Certainly not for the figures. I didn't know any models who would dangle from a flagpole! (*Laughter*) We did use reference whenever we could, but scenes like that really had to come from our imagination. Most visual references were technical, like cars or planes. But if you're serious, you learn pretty quickly (if you're going to learn at all) how to conceive literally everything from every angle. That's really the essence of storytelling in the comics. Besides, there isn't time for models for everything.

WM: *It was common to use movie stills and photo reference back then...*

JR: Some of the newspaper adventure strips artists did use models and photographic research. We weren't after photographic reality. In fact, that sort of realism is restrictive, and loses some of the spirit and mystery and excitement. I remember when we saw art that was too realistic we'd say, "Well, that's just a photograph." We dismissed it.

WM: *Tell me about London, the so-called British Batman.*

JR: The story of London is interesting. This was early in the war and there was a paper shortage. The only way publishers continued to publish is they got a percentage of their former paper quota. And to publish anything new, they had to apply to the War Production Board for permission. One day Charley Biro came in with some paper overage. Lev Gleason had the original paper allotment, but he couldn't produce anything in that short of a time. It was a Thursday or Friday and we had to come up with a complete book for the printer by Monday, or we'd lose the paper quota. That meant that we had to create an entire book of new features (except for Daredevil) in just a few days.

Charley already had the character of Daredevil, and that was the lead-off feature. So we got together a group of guys... Bob Wood, Bernie Klein, George Roussos, and myself... and Dick Wood (Bob's younger brother), who was a writer.

We had a studio on the top floor in a brownstone on 51st Street,

(which is now Rockefeller Center). Each of us had to come up with an idea for a feature... write and draw it over the weekend. We worked around the clock for three straight days.

This was 1941, and we were avidly following the war news overseas. This was the inspiration for the character of London which was my contribution to the book. (In fact, I still have the first page of the first issue... the first comic page I did under my own name.) It contained very purple prose... my slogan was "London Can Take It." London was the living, breathing reality that symbolized the city of London's fortitude.

WM: *That strip ran in* Daredevil, *I recall.*

JR: Right. Many years later, someone from Brazil called to see me, so I invited him to the studio. He said, "Oh, I know your work very well." I thought for sure it was going to be another interview about Batman. But he said, "Oh, you're the creator of London."

"London!" That was the first time I heard of it in 20 years.

He said, "Yes, that was a very pivotal strip, historically. I wrote about it in my book."

It turned out he was an author and professor from a Brazilian University.

So I said, "Really? What was historical about it?"

"Well, as far as my research has shown, that was the first comic that was actually written, drawn, and published about an event of major importance simultaneously with the event."

I never thought of it, but it was true because I had to come

Iwr often featured ground-breaking graphics (only the Pepsi is in color). Below, Jerry's incredible splash for "The Death of Danny Lewis."

AH, I GOT IT... A PERFECT SHOT OF A KILLER IN ACTION!
GRAPHIC
MORE CRIMINALS BROUGHT TO JUSTICE! TIME: AUGUST, 1946 PLACE: PITTSBURGH
JERRY ROBINSON
9113

Jerry Robinson

up with an idea right away. "London" was based on the news then… the city of London under the German bombing… and the fact that we had to do our stories almost overnight.

Incredibly, by the end of the following week that issue of *Daredevil* was actually on the stands!

WM: *That's amazing! Tell me, you worked early on for the publisher who produced* Exciting Comics, *where you did the Fighting Yank and the Black Terror. That publisher is not well-remembered. What was it like to work for them?*

JR: Well, they must be forgettable because I don't remember *anything* about them. We really had very little to do with them. Mort and I did those features in our own studio. I think we might even have messengered them over. Outside of the initial contact, I don't remember ever meeting with them.

Jerry Robinson and Mort Meskin teamed up to "carve" a symbolic western six-shooter out of solid rock for DC.

Drawn by Jerry Robinson and written by Don Rico "Operation Killer" was one of the better 1950's Atlas war stories done for Stan Lee.

WM: *How did you meet Mort Meskin?*

JR: I went over to MLJ to visit Bernie Klein, who was like a brother to me. And in the bullpen, they had a wonderful array of artists. There was Charley Biro, Bob Wood, Mort Meskin… and a couple of others who were quite well-known in comics. So that's how I met Mort. We became very good friends. Finally, the three of us shared an apartment together… Mort, Bernie, and myself. I brought the great work of Bernie and Mort to DC editor, Whit Ellsworth, who immediately took them on.

WM: *You and Mort had an unusual collaboration in that sometimes you'd pencil and he'd ink. Other times it was the other way around.*

JR: Well, we both liked to do all things. Mort was used to doing his complete stories himself, and so was I. The things I enjoyed most about Batman and the other freelance work was the fact that I could do complete stories… pencils and inks… sometimes even doing the color. But Mort and I experimented and varied what we did, which made it more interesting. Sometimes Mort would lay out a very rough idea of a scene, and I would do a finish pencil, and then he would ink part of it and I would ink part of it. Sometimes one of us would do complete pencils. There was a lot of experimentation. Once, we even tried inking a story without pencils… and one with just top light.

WM: *I never heard of a comics team so integrated that they could do that.*

JR: Mort was the only one of us that studied art… at the Pratt Institute. So I learned a lot from Mort in terms of anato-

OPERATION
KILLER
PHASE ONE
HELLO, AMERICA. THIS IS MEL THOMPSON, REPORTING FROM TOKYO! TODAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1950, IS A NEW-LETTER DAY IN THE UNITED NATIONS POLICE ACTION IN KOREA! WELL-TRAINED TROOPS, FRESH REPLACEMENTS, ARE BEING AIRED UP AT THIS VERY MOMENT TO JOIN THE VETERANS OF THE EIGHTH ARMY OF PYONGYANG...
WHERE THESE MEN ARE GOING, THE SKY IS HOT WITH THE DEADLY FIRE OF MODERN WARFARE! IT IS A SHOW, AMERICA... THIS SHOW!
WHO CAN TELL WHAT IS IN THE MINDS OF THESE MEN, NO MORE THAN BOYS, AS THEY FACE AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE?

JET SCOTT
CAUGHT BY JET AT THE ROCKET LAUNCHING STATION- GREGG ADMITS TRYING TO DELAY GALE'S SHIPMENT SO HE COULD COLLECT FORFEIT MONEY!
SHELDON STARK JERRY ROBINSON
I'M TAKING A COUPLE OF GREGG'S ROCKETS BACK TO WASHINGTON WITH ME-
I KNOW A FEW PENTAGON CHARACTERS WHO'LL WANT TO STUDY THEM!
EXPECT TO STAY IN GOOSE BAY LONG, GALE?
THE SKIPPER SAYS HE'LL HAVE MY CARGO UNLOADED IN A DAY OR SO!
AFTER THAT- I'LL RETURN STATE-SIDE FOR FRESH CARGO-
LIKE TO TAKE THE ICE QUEEN BACK TO SEATTLE WITH ME?
FOOLISH QUESTION-
TELEGRAM FOR JET SCOTT!
I KNEW MY LUCK WOULDN'T HOLD OUT!
TROUBLE?
THEY DON'T SAY! BUT THE WIRE SAYS: TAKE FASTEST WAY BACK TO WASHINGTON!
IN WASHINGTON- A STRANGE SERIES OF EVENTS BEGINS--
I DON'T GET IT, ELMER! WHY GO TO THE AIRPORT? SUSIE ISN'T DUE FOR THREE HOURS!
I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT- BUT I JUST HAD THE FUNNIEST FEELING SHE'S COMING IN ON AN EARLIER PLANE!
SHELDON STARK JERRY ROBINSON
Copyright, 1954, New York Herald Tribune Inc.

Jet Scott was a popular sci-fi strip written by Sheldon Stark and drawn by Jerry Robinson.

my. We weren't trying to be super realistic, as I mentioned, but we did work hard to get the style right. Mort's best advice to me (if I was stuck on something) was: "Work it out." (*Laughter*) So I would redraw the figure enough times until I figured out how it would work properly.

We worked together for some time and I think we did some incredible work. We did a lot of work for Simon and Kirby, which I don't think is as well-known as the work we did on Vigilante and Johnny Quick for DC.

WM: *There was a period in the late '40s when Meskin and Jack Kirby worked in a very similar style. I'm thinking of a Black Terror story he penciled and I think you inked that's almost indistinguishable from Kirby. Were the two of you deliberately going for a Simon and Kirby look?*

JR: No, not in any conscious way… Jack and Joe were both their own men, I can assure you of that! I worked with Jack for a while at DC. He sat at the next desk and he was very prolific. I guess there was "cross-fertilization" of influence, as Mort, Jack, and I worked at the same time at the DC studio for a period of time… but I think that would have been the last thing we would have tried to do work in another's style. If there is some similarity, it was because of the common influences.

WM: *Well, it might be Kirby was influenced by Meskin.*

JR: I don't think either one of them was that "influenced" in style. They were both too creative all by themselves.

WM: *You and Finger worked as Kane's assistants for about a year and a half and then you quit. Why?*

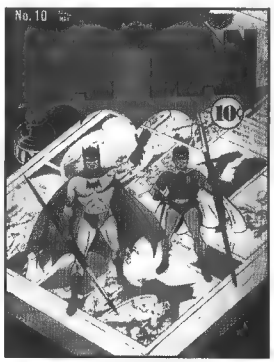
JR: When Bill and I were leaving Batman—or intended to leave—we were both hired directly by DC. Batman was beginning to be very popular and every publisher was after us. Not to inflate our own worth, but other publishers wanted to hire anybody who had contributed anything to the success of Batman. And Bill and I were the only others besides Bob Kane… and he was under contract.

So they wined and dined us. We had a lot of very attractive offers. For instance, at the age of 19, I could have been editing all of Arnold's books at Quality and doing whatever features I wanted.

When DC heard Bill and I were leaving, they hired us directly. We worked out a deal to stay.

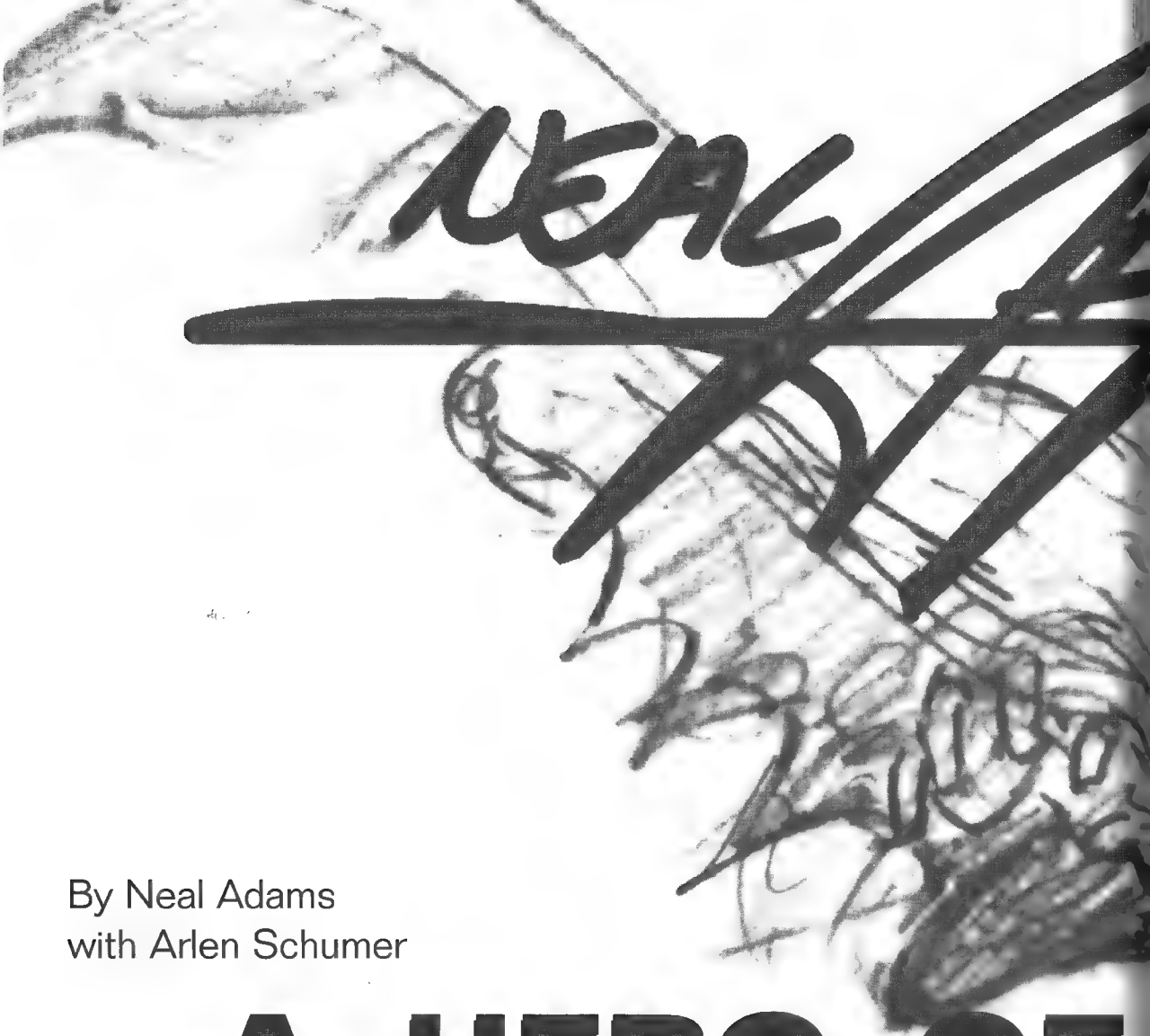
WM: *How did Kane feel when his little band became an arm of DC?*

JR: Well, I don't know. It seemed to me that he was letting control of the feature get out of his direct supervision. As an artist, I wouldn't have wanted that. But I think they saw there was no alternative to keeping us on the Batman team unless they hired us directly. Both of us tried to get more money from Bob, which was *not* forthcoming… (*Laughter*) and even so, certainly couldn't match what we were offered by DC.



Robinson's classic cover art on Batman #10 broke all the rules…

Continued on page 60



By Neal Adams
with Arlen Schumer

...A HERO OF

WHEN I STARTED AT DC COMICS, I'm not at all sure it

was a kid, I was interested in Batman, just like I was int

Batman at a certain point probably because Batman wa

Jms ON BATMAN

VENGEANCE!

occurred to me I would be drawing Batman. When I
erested in all comic characters. I think I focused on
sn't a superhero.

Superman is at the origin of our superheroes, the most powerful, the most wonderful, the most super superhero; Batman is the most human. Batman doesn't have anything that would mark him as being anything other than a normal man—except, of course, that he's very good at what he does. Batman is, in effect, the opposite of Superman; he is the yang to Superman's ying. All the other superheroes fall between Superman and Batman.

Batman, within the realm of his existence, has more reason for being Batman than any other superhero I know of. The reason is vengeance, a

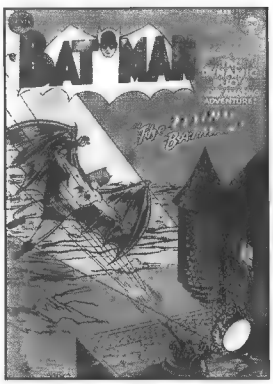
Neal Adams remembers "The Underworld Olympics"

There were people who did good Batman stories over the years... Dick Sprang leaps immediately to mind. On the other hand, perhaps I'm able to edit out all the bad stuff and only really remember the good stuff. That's often the way childhood memories are.

I remember certain stories... especially one about a Batman Olympics. In it the underworld decides they are going to find a replacement for Batman... and the mystery is why Batman is running into all these very athletic and very strong characters. Batman decides to investigate. Disguising himself as an underworld character, he gets involved in competing in these Olympics. He doesn't know the goal of these Olympics when he begins, he is just investigating them.

Now as a young Batman fan, I know that Batman can't be beaten by an underworld character... and that if there really was an Olympics, Batman would probably win some of the events because he is so physically disciplined. As it turns out, some other guy starts to beat him. Then the night before the champion is going to be announced, Batman investigates with Robin and discovers that this guy is using rigged equipment... at least that's my recollection.

Here Batman is faced with a dilemma in that some underworld character has beaten him by cheating. So Batman, in the midst of the convocation, points out that there is only one way that this guy could be so good, and that is if, in reality, he's Batman in disguise.



BATMAN #82 (MAR 1954)

"Welcome to the Underworld Olympics!"

All the bad guys say "right, he is Batman," and they grab him. So the second runner up, who really is Batman, gets to play the part of Batman in this underworld gig. What a great plot.

I haven't read that story since the early 1950s, but that's the way I remember it... a very good Batman story that made an impression on me. Perhaps it has some rough edges... maybe I didn't get every detail right... but still a wonderful story. I like the fact that it combines Batman's physical ability (which he has to have), with his mental talents... his ability to figure things out and come up with great solutions. Batman is the kind of character you can believe in and really like.

very strong motivating factor. People who are vengeful are very rarely as vengeful as Batman. Bruce Wayne didn't forget and hasn't forgotten, it keeps on coming back to him. So there is something about the Batman character you tend to remember.

Batman to me is like an idealized form—if any of us wanted to be a character, it seems to me we'd want to be Batman. We don't want to be Captain Marvel, we can't even imagine that. We don't want to be Mr. Fantastic. We certainly don't want to be Spider-

Extreme close-ups of the historic and rare Neal Adams thumbnail sketches used in the first Ra's Al Ghul story.

Man, we don't want to be tormented that way. But we do want to have a sense of revenge. We do want to have a reason for doing these things, otherwise why do we do them?

Most of us are second hitters. There are a lot of people that are first hitters, people that walk up to you if you ding their car—you know you could get into a fight, but you really don't want to, and the other guy walks up to you and punches you in the nose—he's a first hitter. He doesn't even think about it. Most of these guys are pretty much either criminals or they certain-

Continued on page 56

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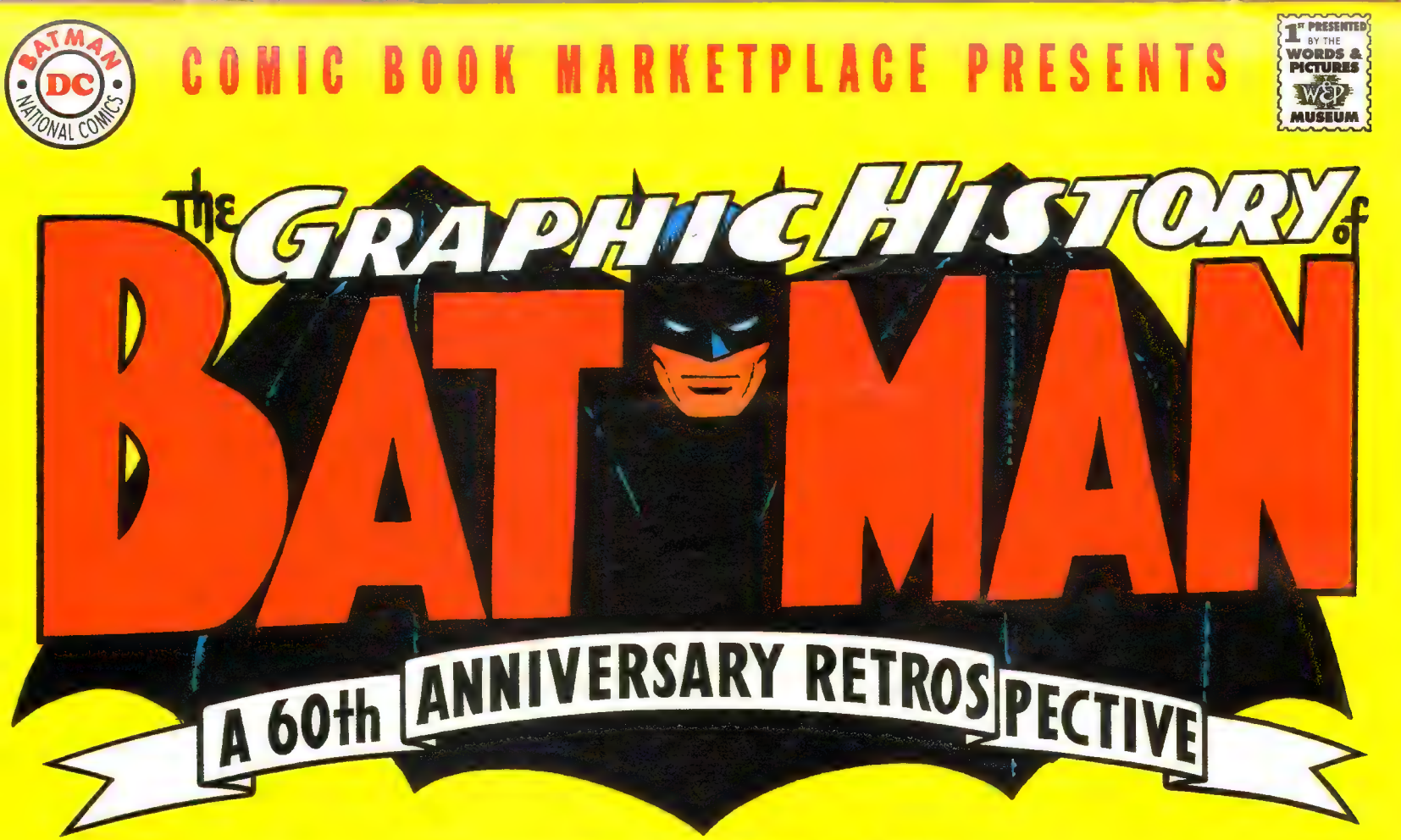
THE GRAPHIC HISTORY OF BATMAN

A 60th ANNIVERSARY RETROSPECTIVE



WRITTEN & DESIGNED BY

ARLEN SCHUMER

NEW COLOR ART & PRODUCTION BY

SHERRI WOLFGANG

BATMAN, THE BAT SYMBOL, AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS, THE DISTINCTIVE LIKENESSES THEREOF, AND ALL RELATED INDICIA ARE TRADEMARKS OF DC COMICS INC.

The LEGEND of the BATMAN

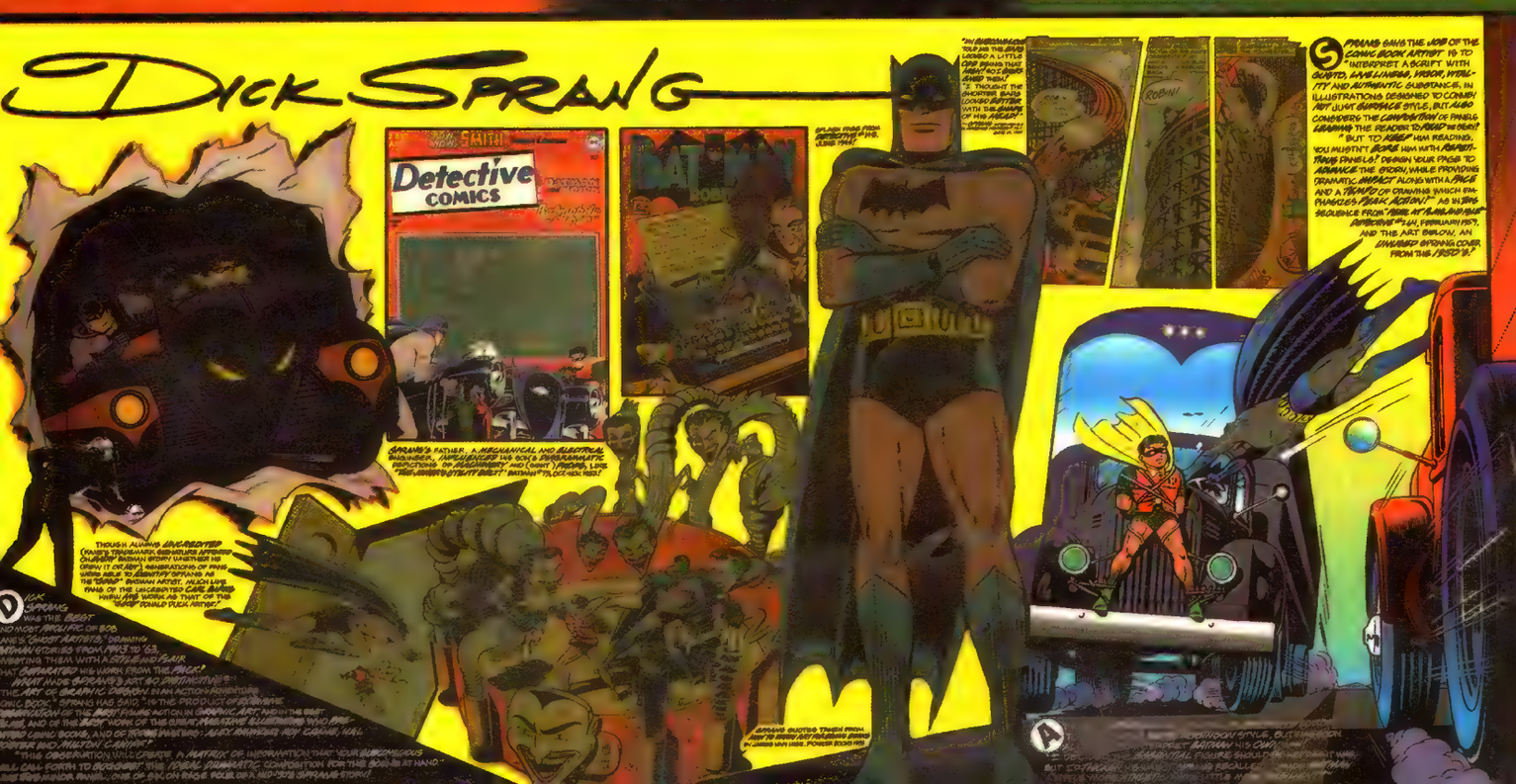
BOB KANE CREATED BATMAN IN THE WAKE OF THE OVERNIGHT SUCCESS OF SUPERMAN IN 1938. INSPIRED BY LEONARDO DA VINCI'S 15TH CENTURY FLYING MACHINE DESIGNS THAT HE HAD SEEN YEARS BEFORE, KANE GAVE FORTH TO DA VINCI'S NOTION: "YOUR BIRD SHALL HAVE NO OTHER MODEL THAN THE BAT."

(RIGHT) THE COVER OF BATMAN'S FIRST OF COMIC BOOK APPEARANCE — NOTE THE GUY HOLDING BATMAN UP ON THE COVER OF DETECTIVE #27

BY BOB KANE

LIKE SUPERMAN, BATMAN TOO WAS A SMASH SUCCESS, LEADING TO HIS OWN TITLE AND A DAILY COMIC STRIP. KANE EASED HIS BURGEONING WORKLOAD BY HIRING ASSISTANTS, ARTISTS WHO WOULD STAMP BATMAN WITH THEIR OWN DISTINCTIVE STYLES...

DICK SPRANG

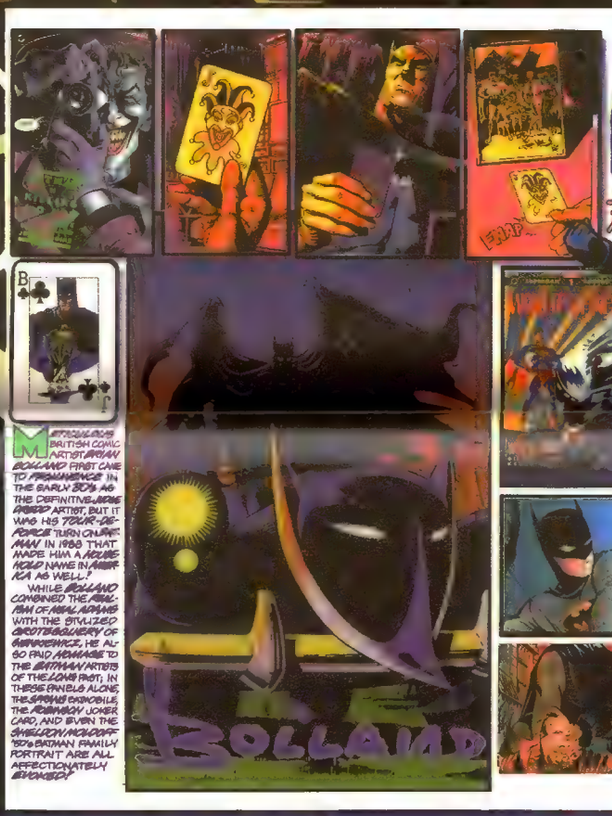

Detective COMICS
BAT-MAN
SPRANG'S FATHER, A MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEER & AMATEUR MAGICIAN HAD SOLD INVENTIONS OR PATENTS TO "GIMBELS" AND "MACY'S" FROM AGE 12 ON. "HIS LOWER BUTTERFLY BRACE" BATMAN™ TM & COPYRIGHT 1939
SPLASH PAGE FROM BATMAN #13 (FALL OF 1941, JUNE 1941)
"IN BATMAN #13 I TOLD MY STORY AS IF I LOOKED A LITTLE OVER BRUNO'S HEAD AT BOB KANE'S BATMAN" "I THOUGHT THE CHARACTERS LOOKED BETTER WITH THE SHADOW OF HIS MASK!"
ROBIN!
SPRANG'S FATHER, A MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEER & AMATEUR MAGICIAN HAD SOLD INVENTIONS OR PATENTS TO "GIMBELS" AND "MACY'S" FROM AGE 12 ON. "HIS LOWER BUTTERFLY BRACE" BATMAN™ TM & COPYRIGHT 1939
SPRANG QUOTES THESE FROM HOW TO DRAW MY HEROES BOOK BY JAMES VAN HISE. POWER BOOK NO.
SPRANG SAYS THE JOB OF THE COMIC BOOK ARTIST IS TO "INTERPRET A SCRIPT WITH DRAMA, EXCITEMENT, VISION, REALITY AND AUTHENTIC SUBSTANCE. IN ILLUSTRATIONS DESIGNED TO COMIC ART JUST SURFACE STYLE, BUT ALSO CONSIDERS THE COMPOSITION OF PANELS LEADING THE READER TO KEEP THE STORY "BUT TO KEEP HIM READING, YOU MUSTN'T BORE HIM WITH REPETITIOUS PANELS. DESIGN YOUR PAGE TO ADVANCE THE STORY, WHILE PROVIDING DRAMATIC IMPACT ALONG WITH A PACE AND A TREND OF DRAWING WHICH EMPHASIZES "REAL ACTION!" AS WITH THIS SEQUENCE FROM "RUE, AT THE MOMENT OF IMPENDING PLAY, FEBRUARY 1937, AND THE ART BELOW, AN UNUSED SPRANG COVER FROM THIS PERIOD."

FRANK MILLER BATMAN THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS

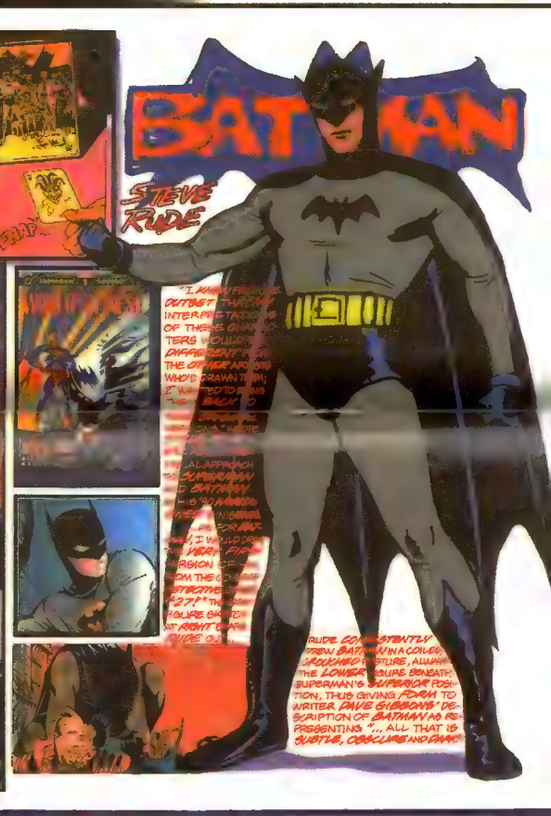
"I REALLY LIKE THE IMAGE OF THIS RAVENOUS, FIFTY-YEAR-OLD BATMAN--THE GARGOYLE PROPORTIONS HE TAKES ON, AND THE UGLY GRIN HE WEARS WHEN HE'S BEATING PEOPLE UP."
PUBLISHED IN 1986, THE FOUR ORIGINAL ISSUES OF THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS WERE PERFECT BOUND, PRINTED IN HEAVY STOCK, AND PRINTED IN FULL PROCESS COLOR ON QUALITY PAPER. WHAT HAD BECAME KNOWN AS "GRAPHIC NOVELS" TODAY IS NOW AN INDUSTRY STANDARD!
LIKE A FLASH OF LIGHTNING, FRANK MILLER'S GRAPHIC NOVEL--BOTH THE COMIC BOOK AND MAINSTREAM MEDIA WORLDS BY STORM!
"BATMAN IS GOTHAM, IT'S A MAGICAL CAMPING AUTHORITY IS THE ETERNAL" --FRANK MILLER
THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS IS INTERSPERSED WITH 8-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS THAT EMBODY THE MYTHIC ASPECTS OF THE BATMAN CHARACTER: A CREATURE OF THE NIGHT, A HEROIC MODEL TO THE YOUNG, A GUARDIAN TO THE PEOPLE!
IN THIS ISSUE
BARN: BATMAN FIGURE SHOT IN (REVERSE) INSET, TITLE PAGE ILLUSTRATION FROM THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS HARDCOVER!

BATMAN YEAR ONE

AFTER CHRONICLING BATMAN'S LAST YEAR IN THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, WRITER FRANK MILLER BOOKED HIS NEXT ACHIEVEMENT IN 1987 WITH BATMAN: YEAR ONE, COLLABORATING WITH ARTIST DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI, WHO LENT A MORE GRITTY
OF BATMAN, WITHOUT SACRIFICING ANY OF THE CHARACTER'S ICONIC DUAL TENSION AS IN THESE IMAGES FROM THE SERIES.
LARGE FIGURE: FRANK MILLER PROMOTIONAL ILLUSTRATION
UPPER RIGHT: ENDPAPER ILLUSTRATION FROM BATMAN: YEAR ONE HARDCOVER EDITION
LOWER RIGHT: FRONT PIECE ILLUSTRATION FROM BATMAN: YEAR ONE PART FOUR
MAZZUCCHELLI



MERCURIOUS BRITISH COMIC ARTIST BRIAN BOLLAND FIRST CAME TO PROMINENCE IN THE EARLY 80'S AS THE DEFINITIVE JUDGE DREDD ARTIST, BUT IT WAS HIS TOUR-DE-FORCE TURN ON BATMAN IN 1988 THAT MADE HIM A HOUSE HOLD NAME IN AMERICA AS WELL!
WHILE BOLLAND COMBINED THE REALISM OF NEAL ADAMS WITH THE STYLIZED GROTESQUERY OF GIBBONS/ERIC, HE ALSO PAID HOMAGE TO THE BATMAN ARTISTS OF THE 1940'S PAST. IN THESE PANELS ALONE, THE JOKER'S GRIN, THE ROBIN'S COSTUME, THE BATMOBILE'S CARD, AND EVEN THE SHELDON MOLDOFF 1950'S BATMAN FAMILY PORTRAIT ARE ALL AFFECTIONATELY EVOKED!


BATMAN
STEVE RUDE
"I ALWAYS APPROACH BATMAN AS IF I WERE DOING THE DEFINITIVE VERSION FROM THE OUTSET. I'M NOT TRYING TO BE DIFFERENT FROM ANYBODY ELSE. I'M JUST TRYING TO DO MY VERSION OF BATMAN. I'M NOT TRYING TO BE DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER ARTISTS WHO'VE DRAWN THE CHARACTER. I WANT TO BE THE BEST BATMAN I CAN BE, RIGHT NOW!" --STEVE RUDE
RUDE CONSISTENTLY DRAWS BATMAN IN A COILED, CROUCHED POSTURE, ALWAYS SQUARE BENEATH SUPERMAN'S SUPERIOR POSITION, THUS GIVING FORM TO WRITER DAVE GIBBONS' DESCRIPTION OF BATMAN AS REPRESENTING "... ALL THAT IS SUBTLE, CRAGGY AND DARK."

BATMAN THE ANIMATED SERIES!

"WE WANTED TO PRESENT A CLASSIC VISION OF BATMAN, A SORT OF ARCHETYPAL BATMAN!" --PAUL DINI, STORM EDITOR, 1992
"I LIKED NEAL ADAMS' BATMAN, BUT I CAN'T JUST TAKE HIS DESIGN AND PUT IT ON THE SCREEN--IT HAS TO GO THROUGH THE CARTOONING PROCESS. IT HAS TO BE TRANSLATED. CARTOONS HAVE TO BE STYLIZED --AND IT'S BE RONP. JUST BEING REAL IT CAN'T BE A REFERENCE. IT HAS TO BE RUBBER LINES--IT ALWAYS HAS TO BE CARICATURE." --BRUCE TIMM
BY DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM ALL THE BEST COMIC BOOK INCARNATIONS OVER THE YEARS--FROM BOB KANE'S ORIGINAL CONCEPTION TO STEVE RUDE'S VERSION, TIMM, DINI AND ADAMS TO KANE'S--TIMM, DINI AND WARNER BROS. ANIMATION HAVE SUCCEEDED WHERE ALL PREVIOUS CARTOON TV SHOWS AND MOVIES HAVE FAILED. THEY HAVE BROUGHT BATMAN TO LIFE, CREATING THE DEFINITIVE TRANSLATION OF ANY COMIC BOOK CHARACTER TO DATE!
ANOTHER POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON TIMM'S BATMAN DESIGN IS THAT OF JACK KIRBY! THE PANEL ABOVE IS FROM TALES OF SUSPENSE #59, NOVEMBER 1964

CARMINE INFANTINO
BLAM!
BLAM!
BRATATATA!
BLAM!
BAM!
DETECTIVE
ORIGINAL CAPTION TO THE COVER OF DETECTIVE COMICS #305, JULY '62: "BATMAN AND ROBIN 'IN HOUSE' TO LOCKER VAULT— ONLY TO RUN INTO A HAIL OF BULLETS!"
INFANTINO + ANDERSON
"I REALLY LIKE BATMAN...
HE BECAME MY CHARACTER!"
NEAL ADAMS
the POST-ADAMS NEW WAVE 1972-1986
THE BATMAN IS DEAD
LONG LIVE THE NEW BATMAN
IN THE WAKE OF NEAL ADAMS' IMPACT CAME A NEW GENERATION OF COMIC ARTISTS WHO WOULD GO ON TO CREATE CLASSIC COMICS WORKS - - - AND LEAVE THEIR MARK ON THE BATMAN!
MIKE KALUTA
BRIGHTSON
SWAMP THING
DARK KNIGHT!
NIGHT OF THE REAPER!
"BUT BY ANY WHY!" SHOUTS JASON ASKANT ON THIS COVER
BUT WHEN HE FINALLY GOT AROUND TO DRAWING — AND PAINTING — BATMAN, (IN ISSUE #400, 1986), HE HAD LONG EXPERIMENTING WITH MIXED MEDIA AND ART-GROUP NOTHING TRADITION AFTER HE IS READY! WITH ANARCHY AS HIS GUIDE, HE HAS CREATED NO TAMERS! THIS FINAL CONFRONTATION BATMAN, PERHAPS DARKER THAN THE SPIRIT AND IN THE ANONYMOUS ARTISTS, PAINTED THE WAY TO THE MORE EXTREME VERSIONS OF THE DARK KNIGHT COMIC.

The Painted Batman

ALONG WITH THE TWIN SUCCESSES OF *THE DARK KNIGHT* AND *THE KILLING JOKE*, THE FULLY-PAINTED GRAPHIC NOVELS OF HOWARD CHAYKIN (*EMPIRE* AND *THE STARLIN DESTINATION*) AND BILL SIENKIEWICZ (*ELEKTRA: ASSASSIN* AND *DAREDEVIL: LOVE AND WAR*) EXPANDED THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE *MEDIUM* IN THE 1980'S; SO IT WAS *INEVITABLE* THAT, OF *ALL* COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS, *BATMAN* WOULD PROVE TO BE THE MOST *VERSATILE* CANVAS UPON WHICH MAINSTREAM COMIC BOOKS OF THE *'90'S* WERE *PAINTED!*

Brian Bolland

...ARRIVED ON THE COMICS SCENE IN 1987 WITH A *MULTIMEDIA* APPROACH HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY *SIENKIEWICZ*--'89'S *ARKHAM ASYLUM* WAS M.+KEAN'S MOST AUDACIOUS WORK UP TO THAT TIME, A *TOUR-de-FORCE* of *PAINTING, PHOTOGRAPHY* AND *GRAPHIC DESIGN!*

Simon Bisley

...IS THE SIGNATURE OF THE U.K.'S *SIMON BISLEY*, WHO CAME OUT of the *BRITISH* COMICS SCENE WITH A STYLE BEST DESCRIBED AS *"FRAZETTA ON STEROIDS"*--OR, *"ON ACID"*--! BISLEY CHANNELED HIS *LOVE* for the *MASTER'S* PAINTING STYLE THROUGH *EXPERIMENTATION* INFLUENCED, LIKE

McKEAN, by *SIENKIEWICZ'S* GRAPHIC SCHIZOPHRENIA--MOST EVIDENT IN THE '90 PAINTED GRAPHIC NOVEL *SLAINE THE HORNED GOD*. BISLEY'S PAINTED *JUDGE DREDD* COMICS PAVED THE WAY for '91'S *JUDGMENT ON GOTHAM*, IN WHICH HE PAINTED A *BULKED-UP* BATMAN *HEAVY DUTY for LEATHER*--A MATCH for *MEGA CITY ONE'S* TOP COP!

Alex Ross

...PROMISES TO PUT HIS PAINTED *STAMP* ON *BATMAN*--WITH AS MUCH *IMPACT* AS HIS PHOTOREALISTIC PORTRAYAL OF SUPERMAN IN '98'S OVERSIZED PAINTED STORY *"PEACE ON EARTH"*--WHEN HIS TENTATIVELY-TITLED *"FEAR"* IS PUBLISHED IN '99! *ROSS* PROVIDED A *PREVIEW* of SORTS WITH THE IMAGE ABOVE, FROM THE *LENTICULAR* COVER of '98'S *NO MAN'S LAND!*

New Collection

This is a new purchase out of Canada.All books have exceptional pages and deep color.I tried to grade these very conservitavely. The majority are priced well below guide.Orders over $200 quailfy for a 10% disount, and free shipping.

Action Comics	277	Fine	$20.00
Action Comics	332	Fine	$5.00
Action Comics	352	Fine-	$4.00
Adventure Comics	282	Fine+	$50.00
Adventure Comics	283	FVF	$60.00
Adventure Comics	284	FVF	$30.00
Adventure Comics	340	VF-	$20.00
Atom,The	24	Fine-	$5.00
Batman	99	Good+	$35.00
Batman	116	VG-	$45.00
Batman	117	VG-	$40.00
Batman	134	VG/F	$30.00
Batman	Annual	1VG/F	$95.00
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Brave and the Bold,The	35	VG+	$75.00
Brave and the Bold,The	37	VG/F	$44.00
Brave and the Bold,The	38	VG/F	$39.00
Brave and the Bold,The	46	VG/F	$12.00
Brave and the Bold,The	61	Fine-	$28.00
Brave and the Bold,The	72	Fine-	$10.00
Flash,The	114	VG+	$50.00
Flash,The	115	VG+	$40.00
Flash,The	116	Fine/Fine+	$50.00
Flash,The	117	Fine/Fine+	$75.00
Flash,The	118	VG+	$35.00
Flash,The	119	Fine-	$42.00
Flash,The	122	Fine+	$45.00
Flash,The	123	Fine	$240.00
Flash,The	124	Fine	$30.00
Flash,The	149	Fine+	$25.00
Flash,The	155	Fine/Fine+	$15.00
Green Lantern	1	Fine-	$475.00
Green Lantern	2	Fine-	$140.00
Green Lantern	3	Fine-	$95.00
Green Lantern	4	Fine	$85.00
Green Lantern	6	Fine	$80.00
Green Lantern	7	Fine-	$60.00
Green Lantern	8	Fine-	$60.00
Green Lantern	9	VG/F	$50.00
Green Lantern	48	Fine-	$15.00
Green Lantern	52	Fine-	$18.00
Hawkman	13	Fine	$15.00
Hawkman	16	FVF	$15.00
House of Secrets	77	Fine/Fine+	$18.00
My Greatest Adventure	29	GVG	$15.00
My Greatest Adventure	33	VG-	$15.00
My Greatest Adventure	46	VG	$15.00
My Greatest Adventure	47	VG/F	$15.00
My Greatest Adventure	48	Fine-	$20.00
My Greatest Adventure	49	Fine-	$20.00
My Greatest Adventure	51	VG/F	$15.00
My Greatest Adventure	52	VG/F	$15.00
My Greatest Adventure	53	Fine-	$18.00
My Greatest Adventure	54	VG+	$12.00
My Greatest Adventure	55	VG/F	$15.00
My Greatest Adventure	56	Fine-	$18.00
My Greatest Adventure	56	Fine-	$18.00
My Greatest Adventure	57	Fine	$20.00
My Greatest Adventure	58	Fine	$20.00
My Greatest Adventure	59	Fine	$20.00
My Greatest Adventure	60	VG+	$12.00
Mystery in Space	61	VG	$25.00
Mystery in Space	62	VG+	$28.00
Mystery in Space	63	Fine-	$35.00
Mystery in Space	65	Fine	$40.00
Mystery in Space	64	Fine-	$36.00
Mystery in Space	66	Fine-	$36.00
Mystery in Space	67	VG/VG+	$24.00
Mystery in Space	68	VG/VG+	$24.00
Mystery in Space	70	VG/F	$32.00
Mystery in Space	71	Fine-	$36.00
Mystery in Space	76	VG/F	$20.00
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Sea Devils	2	Fine	$65.00
Sea Devils	28	Fine+	$15.00
Sgt. Bilko	8	GVG	$25.00
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Showcase	16	Good	$75.00
Showcase	17	Good	$150.00
Showcase	28	VG/F	$60.00
Showcase	29	Fine-	$88.00
Showcase	34	VG	$150.00
Showcase	35	VG/F	$125.00
Showcase	60	Fine-	$60.00
Strange Adventures	86	Good	$10.00
Strange Adventures	92	Good-	$8.00
Strange Adventures	95	Good+	$12.00
Strange Adventures	97	VG-	$18.00
Strange Adventures	103	Good+	$8.00
Strange Adventures	119	VG	$15.00
Strange Adventures	120	GVG	$25.00
Strange Adventures	121	VG+	$15.00
Strange Adventures	122	GVG	$10.00
Strange Adventures	124	VG/F	$18.00
Strange Adventures	125	Fine	$18.00
Strange Adventures	129	Fine-	$22.00
Strange Adventures	130	Fine	$18.00
Strange Adventures	131	Fine-	$15.00
Strange Adventures	132	Fine	$22.00
Strange Adventures	133	Fine	$18.00
Strange Adventures	135	VG	$15.00
Strange Adventures	136	VG++	$10.00
Strange Adventures	139	VG/F	$12.00
Strange Adventures	141	Fine-	$13.50
Strange Adventures	144	VG/F	$24.00
Strange Adventures	146	VG/F	$12.00
Strange Adventures	148	Fine-	$12.00
Strange Adventures	149	Fine-	$12.50
Strange Adventures	157	Fine	$13.50
Strange Adventures	161	VG+	$6.00
Superboy	87	VG/F	$16.00
Strange Adventures	184	VG/F	$21.00
Superboy	87	VG/F	$16.00
Superboy	89	Fine-	$50.00
Superman	144	Fine	$32.00
Superman	145	Fine	$32.00
Superman	146	Fine+	$65.00
Superman	147	Fine+	$60.00
Superman	148	Fine	$32.00
Superman	Ann. 1	VG-	$110.00
Superman	Ann. 2	VG/VG+	$65.00
Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen	47	VG/VG+	$15.00
Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen	51	VG/F	$15.00
Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen	53	VG	$10.00
Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen	54	Fine-	$12.00
Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen	55	Fine-	$12.00
Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen	56	VG/F	$10.00
World's Finest	117	Fine	$25.00
World's Finest	118	Fine-	$22.00
World's Finest	119	Fine	$25.00
World's Finest	120	Fine-	$22.00
Fantasy Masterpieces	4	VG+	$5.00
Fantasy Masterpieces	2	VG+	$5.00
Fantastic Four	46	Fine+	$20.00
Marvel Collectors' Item Classics	2	Fine	$8.00
Marvel Tales	4	VG/F	$15.00
Strange Tales	144	FVF	$12.00
Tales of Suspense	77	Fine++	$12.00
Tales of Suspense	81	Fine+	$12.00
Tales to Astonish	79	VG/F	$8.00
Colt .45	7	Fine	$12.00
Four Color	1157	Fine+	$10.00
Four Color	1230	VG+	$15.00
Outer Limits,The	14	Fine	$5.00
Thirteen (Going on Eighteen)	18	VG/F	$1.00
Jetsons,The	12	Fine-	$10.00
Man from U.N.C.L.E.,The	4	FVF	$15.00
Total War	2	VG+	$5.00
Twighlight Zone,The	15	Fine+	$7.50
Twighlight Zone,The	14	VF-	$15.00
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Mysteries of Unexplored Worlds	19	Fine	$42.00
Space Adventures	32	Fine-	$36.00
Space Adventures	33	VG+	$60.00
Space War	8	Fine	$30.00
Space War	5	Fine-	$28.00
Strange Suspense Stories	47	VG/F	$18.00
Unusual Tales	22	VG+	$12.00

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BIFF! POW!
WHAM! SOCK!
Hollywood legend
Adam West
tells all about
the high-camp
Batman TV show!

From Captain Quik to TV's CAPED CRUSADER!

BY STEPHEN BARRINGTON

Even though Billy West Anderson had a promising movie and television experience in his favor, it was several Nestle's Quik commercials that would propel him to international stardom.

Billy West Anderson? Maybe you know him better as Adam West—Batman—the colorful superhero of the baby boomer generation.

West's rendition of Batman is one of the most recognizable in the world; a pop icon who has endured since the middle '60s. Some call it camp and others great entertainment. Whatever the opinion, the SLAM, BANG and POW featured on the small screen changed TV and the Dark Knight's fortunes forever.

In 1965, Adam West did several Nestle's Quik commercials, catching the attention of Batman producer, William Dozier. Despite having completed a "spaghetti western" overseas, *The Relentless Four,* and films *Robinson Crusoe on Mars* and *The Outlaws Is Coming* with the Three Stooges, Dozier was impressed with West's whimsical take-off of James Bond in the Nestle's ad.

After auditioning for the commercial, West landed the role of Captain Quik and ultimately did three spots. "These commercials were done very tongue-in-cheek, spoofing the spy movies and TV shows of the day," West recalled. West was adorned in a captain's uniform and hat in the 30-second black and white ads, using his soon-to-be famous voice that would help launch his career as the Caped Crusader.

"I had to rescue the Nestle's Quik chocolate milk powder from the hands of villains, who were ostensibly off-screen. The scene is on a boat and in the last few seconds, I jump into the water and inflate a "horsey" preserver around my waist. It was very funny," West chuckled.

According to West's agent, Fred Wostbrock, Dozier (who did the narration on Batman) remembered Adam from those commercials, commenting, "He's our guy" and then called his agent, Lew Sherrell.

"I told Lew, that I wasn't going to audition for Batman; 'Either they want me or they don't.' I was very busy at the time with another overseas western awaiting. I was only in town because I wanted to take a break to be with my children," West remembered.

In the previous years, West had done numerous TV pilots that hadn't sold, including one with William Shatner who would find his own claim to fame the same year Batman debuted with *Star Trek*. A short stint on *The Detectives* had given him some credibility.

A new day was dawning for West after his meeting with Dozier. He laughed out loud when he read the script for Batman. He had previously pondered the effect this show might have on his future career (with George Superman Reeves specifically in mind) but said "screw it" and accepted the role.

In *Back to the Batcave*, West said that National Periodicals (now DC) had been trying to sell a straight Batman action series about a year before, shooting photos of ex-football star and movie Tarzan Mike Henry as the Caped Crusader. National shopped it around with ABC ultimately taking the option on it. William Dozier and writer Lorenzo Semple, Jr. turned it around with their spin on it, turning it into a big hit.

The first villain Batman on *Batman* faced was the Riddler played by comic impressionist Frank Gorshin. "We became good friends," West said of Gorshin (they share Wostbrock as their agent today). "I credit Frank with setting the pace of the show because he was wonderful as the maniacal Riddler."

Cesar Romero was another favorite for West since he had seen Romero in the movies many times growing up in Walla Walla, Washington. Romero's role as the Joker as well as his sinister laugh made him an audience and fan favorite. West also admired and loved working with Burgess Meredith as the Penguin and Julie Newmar as Catwoman. Other favorites were Anne Baxter who played Zelda the Great and against Vincent Price's Olga the Egghead and Joan Collins, the Siren. Incidentally, guest stars... er villains, were paid $2,500 to do a show.

(West only made about $45,000 the first season and about $75,000 by the third season. However, for the feature film he pulled in $100,000.)

"I thought Julie Newmar was wonderful as Catwoman," West remembers. "Julie caused me to have curious stirrings in my utility belt," West mused. "People asked if I ever had romantic relations with Julie but my answer to that is we were great friends... but a true crime fighter never tells about his private life."

The show was originally set to debut in the fall of 1966 but ABC (then the #3 network), saw its fall lineup sinking fast and pushed up the production of *Batman*. The huge smash of the series shot *Batman* to number one in the ratings and spurred the filming of the *Batman* movie during the summer.

West despises the word "camp" when applied to the series. "At the time we were doing the show, *Batman, Detective Comics,* and *World's Finest Comics* (over the previous years) depicted the Caped Crusader transformed into, among other things, a giant ape, an invisible Batman, a zebra Batman, and a Rip Van Batman. Other stories featured a mummy Batman and Robin, a flying Batcave, a Whirly-Bat, plus a dog and a magic dwarf both with batmasks. And our show was silly?" West asked rhetorically.

The success of the show rescued the comic book titles from the threat of cancellation. The book was not doing well even with the "new look" debuting in 1964. Yet the circulation of *Batman* hovered in the stratosphere (in the one-million range) at the height of the show's popularity.

West researched the role before any filming took place, reading old issues of Batman and screening 1940's serials made in 1943 and 1949, starring Lewis Wilson and Robert Lowery respectively. While this didn't help as much as he thought, West pushed on, reading *The Scarlet Pimpernel* and *Scaramouche*. He discovered the villains were the ones who were going to be more intriguing. West also gained some insight by reading Jules Feiffer's breakthrough classic *The Great Comic Book Heroes* which hit the stands in 1965. (The Feiffer book is now considered a valuable collectible in its own right, with dust jacketed copies selling for record prices.)

However, West obtained the most crucial information on the Batman persona by talking at length with creator Bob Kane. But even after all the research, West still was uncertain about a point of view and immersed himself into the comic books once more. West's additional research paid off and the building blocks for his characterization of Batman was finally in place.

West said the costume he wore was "no day at the beach." He cited how the cowl restricted his vision and that the grey tights felt dry and itchy. West not-so-fondly recalled "The blue satin shorts were worse. It was like spending all day in a wet Speedo. And going to the 'batroom' was the worst of all. To go, I had to take almost everything off: gloves, utility belt, boots, tights and trunks. And since we were always on a tight schedule I dealt with it by staying away from coffee."

"One of the fondest memories of doing Batman was when I donned the complete outfit for the first time and strode onto the set. People stared but I had a good feeling about it. I was Batman. Not Adam West," he remembered.

Another part of the equation soon fell into place with the arrival of 19-year-old Bert "Sparky" Gervis—soon to be known as Burt Ward. Charlie Fitzsimmons, who had seen dozens of Robin hopefuls knew he had his man when "Sparky" walked in the door. He got his new name (as suggested by Fitzsimmons) by taking his mother's maiden name of Ward and changing his first name from "Bert" to "Burt."

In Adam West's book *Back to the Batcave* (with Jeff Rovin), he remarked that "Burt was great to work with. He was really into being a superhero, terrific at taking direction, and his boyish enthusiasm as Robin really gave me something to play off of."

Aiding Ward in his role as Robin was the fact he was a Tae-Kwon-Do black belt and often sparred with martial arts great Bruce Lee (who would later appear on an episode of *Batman* in his character of Kato alongside Van Williams as the Green Hornet).

With veteran actors Alan Napier as Alfred; Neil Hamilton as Commissioner Gordon; Stafford Repp as Chief O'Hara and Madge Blake as Aunt Harriet (all now deceased) the cast was set.

Another star of the show wasn't even human. It was the Batmobile. The original Batmobile was a Ford Lincoln Futura customized by the famous George Barris. It cost Barris about $30,000 to turn the Futura into probably the most famous car in the world. Several other Batmobiles would be built during the course of the series as well.

West said that the scripts suffered a little by the second season and a lot more in 1967-1968. The show was then reduced to one episode a week. The addition of Yvonne Craig as Bat-Girl was supposed to help prop up the show's declining ratings in the third season. While Bat-Girl brought more action to the show, the handwriting was on the wall—*Batman* was cancelled in 1968 after 120 half-hour episodes and one feature movie.

Just a year or so before, nearly 1,000 licensed Batman products were on the market.

Still, Batman had a few gasps left. NBC was interested in the show and wanted to do a fourth season if the sets, including the Batcave, were still available. Unfortunately, the Batcave had been destroyed days earlier, and the sets dismantled. It was over.

West finds it amazing how each new generation finds its niche with the character of Batman. While the '70s and '80s were fairly lean times for West (special promotion appearances as Batman and the voice of Batman for the network cartoon were some of the things he did), the aging of the baby-boomers (those born from 1946-1964) has thrust his role as Batman into a more enthusiastic light. Everyone remembers Adam West as Batman. Today, through syndication, *Batman* is arguably one of the most viewed television shows in the world.

West repeated himself from *Back To The Batcave* concerning the *Batman* movies. "I loved playing Batman, giving him a grandiose verve. Batman is a big enough character to be interpreted in a number of ways."

West says he's been asked repeatedly what he thinks of the new Batman. "My usual answer is, 'They have their vision and we had ours.'"

West admired the first *Batman* movie (Tim Burton/ Michael Keaton) from a technical standpoint but couldn't relate to the characterization of Bruce Wayne that well. "I'll admit I was angry and profoundly disappointed when I was not asked to reprise the role."

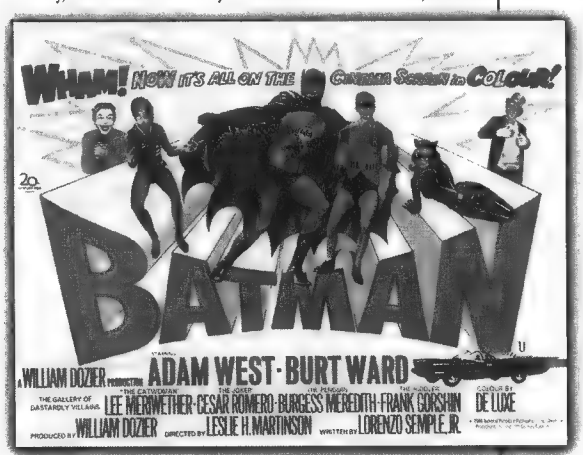
West felt he could have played the part differently and that he wasn't too old to do so. He pointed out actors who had reprised former roles in later years such as William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley in the *Star Trek* movies; Sean Connery as James Bond, and Robert Vaughn in *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*

West, though, has his sights on the future.

West has a special guest star appearance in the comedy Drop *Dead Gorgeous* opening in July. Denise Richards, the next James Bond girl, is the star along with Kirstie Alley. Also featured this summer is West's biography on the *E!* channel and an appearance on the *Donny and Marie Show* along with Frank Gorshin, Burt Ward, and Lee Meriweather (who played Catwoman in the 1966 movie). West is also doing a voice for the new Fox animated series *Spy Dogs* and recently did an episode on *The Family Guy.*

Addressing a somewhat bigger market, West will be doing the voice of "Agent M" for McDonald's in the coming months. West has also appeared on *Politically Incorrect* eight times and *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno on several occasions.

The dream continues for Adam West. "Fans never simply want to shake my hand or get my autograph. They want to talk about what Batman meant to them... For better or worse, richer or poorer, I'm married to the cape."


WHAM! NOW IT'S ALL ON THE CINEMA SCOPE IN COLOUR!
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A WILLIAM DOZIER PRODUCTION
ADAM WEST · BURT WARD
LEE MERIWETHER · CESAR ROMERO · BURGESS MEREDITH · FRANK GORSHIN
DE LUXE
PRODUCED BY WILLIAM DOZIER
DIRECTED BY LESLIE H. MARTINSON
WRITTEN BY LORENZO SEMPLE, JR.

After climbing the ratings ladder on network TV, *Batman* became a hit at movie theaters too.

Bat Magic!

I wasn't quite 13 years old when on Channel 3 locally, a Wednesday night, *Batman* exploded onto the small screen. January 12, 1966, a date burned into my memory.

Being one of 12 children, space around the little black and white television set was at a premium. My older siblings and parents knew better than to risk changing the channel. A full-scale rebellion they didn't need.

For the next 30 minutes we were entranced, enthralled and in comic book heaven. But the effects of the show were much longer lasting. If anything, it enthused us with more energy, something our mother bemoaned.

Scarcely 24 hours later, we were glued to the set again (remember, "same Bat-time, same Bat-channel"). Having been a comic book fanatic all of my life, *Batman* turned out to be one of the greatest forms of escapism for a middle child (I was number seven).

We eagerly awaited each week to see how the Dynamic Duo would escape from their dire situation. It was gripping for the younger mind and a delight to try and figure out what their solution would be. (The *Lost In Space* cliffhangers were nice, but fell short of the originality of the ones on *Batman.*)

I duly noted that Adam West and Burt Ward were the stars of the show and ate up their performances. The straight-laced Bruce Wayne and his impulsive ward, Dick Grayson, made a lasting impact that is still meaningful to this very day.

Later, when we got a color TV, the fantasy was even bigger—the improbable villains, the wonderful angles, and the zany stories were everything a young comic book fan could hope for.

Now, as a forty-something writer that is still an avid comic fan, I got to meet my boyhood idol, Adam West, at a convention in New Orleans in May. He was charming, looking much younger than you might expect, and genuinely friendly. His humor, tongue-in-cheek stories, and his willingness to talk and laugh... were absolutely delightful. The Bat Magic was still there!

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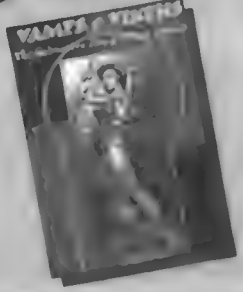

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Citizen Wayne!

AN OVERVIEW OF BATMAN HISTORY!

by Chris Lambert

"THE 'BAT-MAN,' a mysterious and adventurous figure fighting for righteousness and apprehending the wrong doer, in his lone battle against the evil forces of society… his identity remains unknown."

Just a little over half a decade from the inception of the comic book itself, and only a year after the first big comic book superhero Superman arrived, this introduction to a legend saw print. It appeared in the lead story of *Detective Comics* #27, May 1939. The rest is comic book history…

In this first early incarnation, The "Bat-Man," created by Bob Kane and aided by Bill Finger, was often portrayed as part Houdini, part Sherlock Holmes, but was in effect, all vigilante. But why not, he was a reflection of the violent times from which he sprang. The papers issued headlines all through the 1930s dealing with Capone, Dillinger, prohibition, and a world on the brink of the second World War. It was a violent time.

Vigilante, 1939-40

Alone with his terrible vengeance and hatred in a violent world, Bruce Wayne put all the headlines aside and dealt with an unjust world in his own fashion. In that first story, entitled "Case of the Chemical Syndicate," readers are introduced to Police Commissioner James Gordon and his young socialite friend, Bruce Wayne. By story's end, we have not only been introduced to the "Bat-Man," but we have seen him throw a villain into a vat of acid, coolly stating, "A fitting end for his kind." A vigilante for sure!

Readers of this "comic" book who were brought up on pulps and movie serials were probably not that shocked at the thought. In the last panel of the story young Bruce Wayne exits a closet that the "Bat-Man" had just entered… letting the reader in on his dual identity… like so many pulp and serial avengers before him.

So the setting was in place for the mysterious Bat-like figure to mete out justice that seemed right for the times, and this he did with a dark passion. In the next few issues, Bat-Man throws a thug off of a rooftop to his death in *Detective* #28, breaks a henchman's neck in *Detective* #30 (the issue featuring the gritty and fandom-famous torch-in-the-face cover), and watches an evil doctor burn to his death in *Detective* #29, with no more of a comment than, "Death to Dr. Death." Justice with a touch of cruelty and even sadism was the order of the day for this new Bat-Man.

And this dark vigilante was not above using a gun during that first year either. In *Detective* #32, Bat-Man is shown melting down a silver candlestick into bullets, which he loads into a handy .45, and pumps them into a sleeping vampire named the Monk. Bat-Man calmly states, "Never again will you harm any mortal being."

On the cover of *Detective* #33, this new "heroic" figure is shown jumping from a bridge onto a passing car. A holstered handgun upon the hero's belt is lifted by the wind during the jump. At the end of that issue, a blurb tells readers not to miss the next exciting issue. Behind the words, Bat-Man is seen again brandishing a smoking weapon.

But Kane, Finger and early fill-in writer, Gardner Fox gave Bat-Man more than guns to add to his arsenal. They were the first to introduce the ever-growing Bat-paraphernalia. In

Citizen Wayne!

Detective #29, only the third Bat-Man story, our hero is seen drawing a "tough silk rope from his belt." The addition of the utility belt to the mythos was extremely important in Bat-Man's career, and certainly was more believable that the "handy wrench," that he found an issue earlier. Besides handy gas pellets and the like, the belt also hid the famous baterang, a bat-shaped boomerang, that made its debut in *Tec* #31 along with the Bat-Gyro.

But as exciting as this new character was he still had a couple of major problems. His rogues gallery was a bit mundane and reminiscent of the Universal movie lot. The stories featured a rather run-of-the-mill collection of villains... a vampire named the Monk; a maniac with a Napoleon complex; mad scientists with unimaginative monikers such as Dr. Death and Prof. Hugo Strange; and an army of assorted pin-striped hoods and thugs. (Had Batman movies been made at the time, character actors such as George Zucco, John Carradine, and Lionel Atwill would have been kept in roles for years.)

No, something extra was needed. This Bat-Man was going through the motions, having little problem vanquishing foes. But working alone created a tough scenario for scripting... the main character had no one to talk to or share thoughts with. This made for often-repetitious and sometimes dull thought balloons filled with endless exposition. If this Bat-Man were to survive the first year of his adventures, some more tinkering would have to be done. He needed better villains and a partner, someone who the young readers could identify with.

Father Figure & the War, 1940-45

"The Sensational Character Find of 1940!" That's how Robin, the Boy Wonder was first introduced to us in *Detective Comics* #38, cover dated April, 1940. In one page, readers find out how Dick Grayson, acrobat, becomes a circus orphan. In that same page, Dick uncovers the protection racket and its henchmen that have killed his parents. Before he can alert the police though, young Dick is intercepted by the Batman. The Caped Crusader could now be seen grinning, while spouting the line, "How about a sock on the jaw?" For better or worse, Batman could smile.

But even though the tone lightened up, much of the violence inherent in the Dynamic Duo's comics did not. Yet in spite of the continuing murder and mayhem, Batman's persona ultimately shifted from pure vigilante to family man. In *Batman* #1, 1940, Batman is seen machine-gunning a truckload of man monsters. Over the gunsight of his weapon he proclaims, "Much as I hate to take human life, I'm afraid this time it's necessary."

This sentiment continued one issue later in *Batman* #2. In a tale of Jekyll and Hyde type events, a murderer reverts to his meek self as he

passes away before the Caped Crusaders. Robin states, "I feel sort of sorry for him." While Batman proclaims, "This is the only time I was ever sorry to see a criminal die." This remorse ushered in the new "code against killing" that all DC Comics heroes seemed to take at that point. This was also a far cry from the blatant violence from just one year earlier.

With Robin's insertion in the series (an addition that many comic historians say added longevity to Batman's career), the problems of violence and loneliness were addressed. But more importantly, the Dark Knight's rogues gallery became as important as the central character of Batman and Robin. Gone were the steady uninterrupted stream of pin-striped gangsters and henchmen. Starting with *Batman* #1, costumed villains came to the forefront.

Out of the four stories which appeared in that landmark first issue, one of them contained the first appearance of the feline female burglar who would soon be named Catwoman. The other two tales featured both the first and second outings of one of the greatest villains in fictional history... the Joker. (The other story was the last solo Batman offering, originally drawn for *Tec* #38 and displaced by the Robin intro. Not wanting to waste a story, it was thrown into *Bat* #1 to fill out the issue.)

At the end of the second Joker story, the Clown Prince of Crime accidentally stabbed himself while fighting Batman. He was to die like the stacks of victims that were piling up by his hand. But editors saw what they had in the grinning, green-haired gangster... a novel character with real staying power. So they changed the last panel at the last minute... now saying that the Joker was merely wounded.

Early on, the Joker would actually come back from certain death time and time again. But once he was revived from the electric chair in "The Joker Walks the Last Mile," (which was published in 1942) all the Joker stories from then on would be toned down and cleansed of real maniacal violence.

Two other well-recognized villains would help cement Batman's legacy as one of the top two costumed heroes. First was the Penguin, with his trick umbrellas, top hat, and tuxedo. The bird-like bandit made his debut in *Detective Comics* #58 and 59. The second was probably the most tragic of the Caped Crusader's villains. Two-Face, the ex-district attorney, with his charming good looks joined down the center of his face to an acid-scarred, hideous visage is still an incredibly great concept. Two-Face first arrived on the scene in a trilogy of tales in *Detective Comics* #66, 68, and 80.

One other addition to the "Bat Family," was not a villain, but an endearing person that would end up a life-long companion to the dynamic duo. Alfred the butler first appeared in *Batman* #6 and would go on to both aid and mentor the heroic pair as their crusade against crime continued over the years. The importance of protagonistic supporting characters, such as Alfred and Commissioner Gordon, cannot be underestimated in the long history of Batman.

Another circumstance which helped Batman's popularity was the war. By 1942, most comic characters were being used as propaganda tools, their stories depicting the Axis as evil and cruel monsters. Batman was no different as he hawked war bonds from the front covers of *Batman* #12 and 17, while passing out rifles to GIs on the cover of *Batman* #30.

(Was it any wonder that other forms of media

latched onto the newly wholesome Batman and Robin, as they eventually became stars of both radio and the newspaper funny pages (they received their own daily strip from 1943-46).

The formerly morose and dark Dynamic Duo had now become approachable… even friendly. So approachable in fact that in *Detective Comics* #65, Commissioner Gordon asked the pair to go on vacation with him. Relations with the law had warmed to the point that Batman was deputized in *Batman* #7 in a story titled "The People vs. Batman."

Their crime-solving skills weren't exclusive to Gotham City either. By now, Batman had become so well-known in America, that his crime fighting exploits became a nation wide phenomenon. His exploits took him to Ohio, Kansas, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Alaska in a tale from *Batman* #8, entitled, "The Cross-Country Crimes." In *Batman* #21, he also went out west to fight the "Streamlined Rustlers."

In just a few short years, Batman had gone from a quiet, grim vigilante, to a family man, father figure, and national crime fighting icon. In the next phase of his life, the Caped Crusader would further expand that role.

Global Guardian, 1945-57

This phase of Batman's career was his longest and possibly his most tame, as the Caped Crusader's kept the status quo. One aspect of the crime fighter's career had him becoming not much more than a travel agent with a cape, as he scurried around the world hunting trouble.

In the mid-forties, the Dynamic Duo traveled to England to help Scotland Yard in *Detective Comics* #110. Seven years later the Masked Manhunter would hit the shores of Scotland to become "The Lord of Batmanor," in *Detective Comics* #198.

A year and a half later, the Caped Crusader would become "Batman of all Nations," in *Detective* #215. In this adventure, the Dynamic Duo met counterparts of themselves from different countries. There was the Ranger from Australia, The Knight and the Squire from England… as well as The Gaucho, The Legionary, and The Musketeer.

Towards the end of this section of his history, Batman took part in an adventure that more or less encapsulates this period of his life. In *Detective* #248, Batman and Robin travel to Holland, Greece, Austria, Italy, Algeria, Thailand, and Mexico in a story titled, "Around the World in Eight Days."

When the Caped Crusaders ran out of places to go during this 12-year phase, they found different "times" to go to. It seems when things got dull, Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson made an appointment with Professor Nichols, who hypnotized them, sending them on mental time trips. The Dynamic Duo traveled to ancient Greece, Rome, Babylon, and Macedonia. They met King Arthur, Frankenstein, Marco Polo, and even became (in *Detective* #167) "Bodyguards to Cleopatra," all while sitting in Professor Nichols' lab.

Unfortunately during this era, most of Batman's rogues gallery became silly rather than deadly, but few worthy costumed villains with staying power made their debut. The only two still with us today are the Mad Hatter and the Riddler.

This lack of great villains is made even more egregious when one considers the art staff that would have drawn them… Bob Kane's staff of "assistants" had grown to include Jerry Robinson, Dick Sprang, Lew Schwartz, Sheldon Moldoff, and house cover artist Win Mortimer. Who knows what new villains this talented cadre might have drawn… or why no really memorable Batman bad guys (other than the two above) were ever added to the rogues roster.

Of course that didn't stop Kane and company from introducing new allies to the cause with such heroes as Batwoman, Bathound, (the caped canine crusader) and even Superman, who Batman had been sharing adventures with since about the time *World's Finest* shrank its page count. It should be noted that one contingent of Batman fans views this "Batmite/Bathound" era with great fondness, while an equally vocal group condemns it as a low point in the Batman mythos.

Seemingly to make up for a lack of new and exciting villains (and possible overkill on people, animals, and imps in cowls), the stories diverged in two different directions. First, Batman became a caped Ellery Queen, sort of. Mysteries by the dozens were solved month after month by Batman and Robin. So many if fact, that some of the later annuals of collected stories published by DC, would be gathered as, "Batman and Robin's Most Thrilling Mystery Cases!"

"Doom in Dinosaur Hall," "Murder at Mystery Castle," "Mystery of the Sky Museum," and "The Map of Mystery." Two of the better ones from this genre executed in true Agatha Christie, "who-dunit" fashion were the "The Box," from *Detective Comics* #130 and "The Danger Club." from *Batman* #76.

Second, was a direction that may have been the most important of this twelve year (1945-1957) phase. Creative teams began exploring Batman's past, adding much new info to his mythos. In *Batman* #47, readers find out the killer's name who took his parents' life… Joe Chill. Much later in *Detective Comics* #235, "The First Batman," we find that the mugging incident itself was planned by gangster Lew Moxon, in revenge against Thomas Wayne, Bruce's father.

Other interesting behind the scene unveilings were the "Man in the Red Hood," which turned out to be the Joker's origin, as well as a story in *Detective Comics* #205 in which the Dynamic Duo discover the "true" origin of the Batcave.

In a dozen short years, Batman travels around the world, dreams of visiting different historical times, receives a few new friends and foes, and solves hundreds of mysteries. But the uncovering of his true past may have been the most important aspect of this otherwise-dull decade for Batman.

After expanding from Gotham to America, to the entire globe, there just weren't many new horizons for Batman to conquer. But I guess you could still say that everything was "looking up" for the Dynamic Duo. Literally, "up," into the stars, as Batman and Robin take their careers into outer space.

Citizen Wayne!

Aliens and Transformations, 1957-64

This period in Batman's crime fighting career that is usually considered the most difficult to analyze from a fan point of view. Maybe it was America's fascination with outer space during the 1950s... or just that editors had run out of places to send Batman... but this era saw the transformation of the charater into, more or less, a "Buck Rogers" Batman.

But there was more. During this seven-year period, three themes seemed to dominate Batman's life. First was the overabundant amount of space aliens. Second, were the many physical transformations that Batman's went through. And last, were the gimmicky, one-shot villains that overran the Dark Knight's magazines.

A "dominate theme" is truly the correct term here. Looking at all the stories published during this time-frame, Batman bumped into a collection of aliens, robots, and monsters 81 different times. Silly villains came in second, with 58 different bad guys adopting almost laughable costumes and methods. Coming in last are the Caped Crusader's transformations. Here it seems Batman's body underwent more alterations than a cheap suit, as he was transformed into one thing or another 36 different times! Adding the three categories together, that makes for 175 "weird and fantastic" stories in just a seven-year period.

Actually, there seems to be a prototype issue for all this late 1950s/early 1960s strangeness... September, 1953! In the same month, Batman met Quork, the "Manhunter from Mars," in *Batman* #78 (no relation of John Jones), and Batman's body became invisible in *Detective* #199.

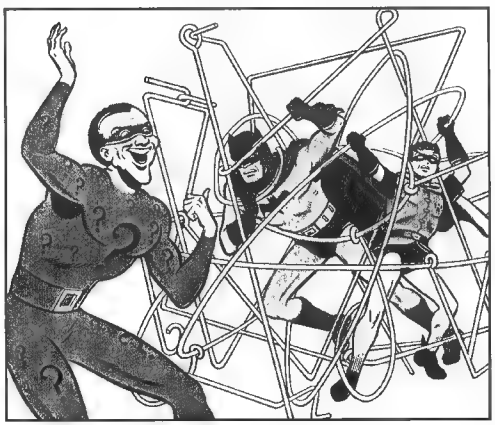
Aliens, robots, and monsters... it was in these stories that Batman seemed determined not to take a back seat in the space race... to the Russians or anyone else. Either the Dynamic Duo was being whisked off into outer space to meet aliens on their home turf (e.g. "Prey of the Alien Hunters") or the ETs came to Batman's hometown ("The Alien Boss of Gotham City") like they did in *Batman* #160.

Among other notable and zany monsters, were the "Jigsaw Creature," "The Crystal Creature," "The Menace of the Multiple Creature," "The Hand from Nowhere," and the "Creature That Doomed Robin."

Silly villains were abundant as well, with names like the Dummy, the Spinner (a guy in a green costume with rings on it), the Sea Fox, the Terrible Trio, the Racer, the Brand, Funny Face, Kite-Man, Simple Simon, and a villain who has to be seen to be believed... the (dare it be said) Bizarre Polka-Dot Man! It was no wonder that so many of these often gimmicky and usually lame villains were defeated and never returned.

One bad guy who wouldn't take no for an answer was the Signalman. This villain wore a yellow hood and cape and a red body suit covered with stars... plus (you guessed it) all sorts of symbols. He not only came back for a return bout, but after a second trip to the slammer, met up with a villain of Green Arrow. (Is this an early and undocumented quasi-crossover of sorts?). With a new motif, the Signalman returned this time as the Blue Bowman and still went as straight as an arrow... back to jail.

Transformations influenced by hit B movies (such as The Incredible Shrinking Man and The Amazing Colossal Man) more than any sort of real creativity were the order of the day. Batman's body underwent some really bizarre and unintentionally humorous changes. Gaining super or extra powers became almost mundane for the Caped Crusader... and it is unclear whether writers should be credited for having great imaginations or criticized for lacking them. But the most amazing of Batman's changes were not based on sci fi or magic... but instead on strange dreams. Consider if you will such bizarre (and funny) entries as Rip Van Batman, Merman Batman, Batbaby, Mummy Batman, Batman-Genie, and Zebra Batman.



In contrast to all of this silliness, two wonderful melodramas did make their way into the pages of Batman books during this time... *Batman* #154 and 156. "The Strange Experiments of Dr. Dorn," and the excellently written "Robin Dies at Dawn," are two of the better human interest dramas presented during this period... and both still hold up today.

Also shaping the history of this Bat-era was the ever-expanding Bat-family (including, eventually, Bat-Girl as a spin-off the TV show) and the creation of more Bat-paraphernalia than you can shake a stick at! (Including the Whirly bat, the Flying Bat-Cave, and the Bat-Marine, among others.)

After seven years of this watering down of the "Dark Knight" character, Batman stories were little more than fodder for young children. With all the juvenile Batman stuff... combined with the stiffly-posed fighting stances, square jaw, colorful surroundings, and multi-hued antagonists... Batman in *Batman*, *Detective*, and *World's Finest* became less a caped crusader and more a spandex-wearing, day-glo Dick Tracy for kids.

In the 25 years since his inception, Batman had gone from the vigilante of the gritty sidewalks to interstellar ambassador and hero of the young.

The "New Look" Detective 1964-68

It was early 1964, and Batman came under attack from a new threat. No, not the Joker, Penguin, or Catwoman... this time from a comics company named Marvel. The "House Of Ideas" had heroes with real problems set in real time and real places. In response, the Dynamic Duo became detectives again and a new artistic direction was charted. Bill Finger was all but gone, along with artists Lew Schwartz, Win Mortimer and Dick Sprang. Sheldon Moldoff stayed on with overseer Bob Kane, But it was time for some new artistic blood.

New inkers were brought on to give Shelly's style a new realism. Also, new editor Julius Schwartz, brought in Flash artist supreme, Carmine Infantino and long-time DC great Murphy Anderson to put their sleek slant into this new look Batman. Another move was to move The Martian Manhunter out of *Detective Comics* after 102 appearances (*Detective* was reportedly about to be canceled). A sleuth-solving hero, the Elongated Man, was added and suddenly Batman's magazines were producing excellent mystery stories, not seen since the early 1950s.

Some of the better stories were "The Castle with

Wall to Wall Danger," "Two-Way Deathtrap," and the "Curious Case of the Crime-less Clues." A complete turnaround from just a few years earlier, was the superior two-part mystery, "Batman's Last Hour," which appeared in *Detective Comics* #366 and 367.

Then an even bolder experiment was attempted. In *Detective* #328, just one month after *Batman* was re-vamped. Incredibly, loyal Alfred was killed off in the story entitled, "Gotham City Line-up." A distant relative, Aunt Harriet was brought in to look after Bruce and Dick after Alfred's demise. Over the years, many fan magazine writers have speculated on DC's reasons for this turn of events. The most common theories are (1) to add suspense and realism to the book, (2) to create thematic tension by having someone that didn't know the Dynamic Duo's secret identities living with the pair and (3) to mimic rival Spider-Man's Aunt May. Until a writer, artist, or editor from that era comes forward to clear up the mystery, this unknown will likely remain an unanswered part of the Batman mystique.

But after a couple of years of good mysteries and great art, a new threat to good Batman stories appeared in January, 1966 when ABC television's Batman made its debut. Within months, the country became "camp" crazy and Batman berserk. In the short run, it helped Batman's magazines as sales soared to nearly a million copies a month. Editors quickly jumped on the bandwagon and prominently featured Batman on the covers of *Justice League*. *Brave & Bold* was virtually turned over to Batman to become his personal team-up book. Things looked bright for Batman for a year or two.

Then in 1968 the TV show was discarded like the fad that is was. Batman's comic circulation plummeted to lower levels than before the show began. The shame of it was the comics continued to tell fairly good mystery stories in spite of the TV show.

But with those accursed "go-go checks" adorning all of DC's titles, (a move designed to prove to young readers how hip DC was… which, of course, proved just the opposite) Carmine Infantino left the art chores to become publisher. The remaining crew reverted to a stiffly posed style and Batman went back to fighting a losing battle against the hordes of Marvel defectors.

Batman's biggest problem was his nationally known role as hero and deputized policeman. That image had to change to revive the character and change its image. The editors had already sent the Caped Crusader back to his roots as a detective. Now was the time to send Batman even further back into his own history… maybe all the way back to the beginning.

Back to the Beginning 1968-74

As the pop-art *Batman* show faded into memory and reruns, the Caped Crusader's magazines all began to take on a different look. Gone was Aunt Harriet from the television series. Alfred was returned to us in one of the most bizarre stories ever… even for a comic book. Dick Grayson was shipped off to college and solo Robin adventures in December 1969 (*Batman* #217). Best of all, most of the panels that were drawn for his books were night scenes… the appropriate environment for a dark avenger.

These creative changes were chiefly due to the new creative wave of talent that came on board at DC. In 1968, many of the older artists and writers retired, quit, or moved on to other projects. That left the door open for new writers like Denny O'Neil and Frank Robbins (of Johnny Hazard-strip fame) to try their hand at scripting. New artists (some with long and acclaimed histories) joined the Batman team… Bob Brown, Irv Novick, Dick Giordano, Jim Aparo, and most importantly, "newcomer" Neal Adams.

It started as Neal became the artist on *World's Finest*. Neal's style exposed fans to a different type of Batman. He later started penciling Bob Haney's Batman stories in *Brave & Bold* and at that point Batman's persona became grittier, darker, more menacing… and nearly every scene took place at night.

Then when Adams was teamed up with the equally innovative Denny O'Neil on both *Batman* and *Detective Comics*, the sparks really flew. Gone were any vestiges of silliness and campiness. Batman was now a creature of the night and truly a "dark" knight. His sudden appearances and disappearances even tended to rattle good friend Commissioner Gordon. Batman referred to criminals as "scum," and "vermin." No more good ol' Batman. Adams and O'Neil put the "The" back in front of Batman.

But now that they had successfully transformed Batman, the new creative team had to transform Batman's villains also. In *Batman* #234, Two-Face returned in a new and frighteningly realistic way (you could almost see the acid dripping from Harvey Dent's chemically scarred face). "The Joker's Five Way Revenge" (*Batman* #251) saw the Clown Prince of Crime using his deadly Joker venom, which forced people to hideously laugh themselves to death. To show how retro this move was, the Joker had first tried this trick back in *Batman* #1, 1940.

There was still more revamping to do. Batman abandoned the Bat-cave and began operating out of his townhouse in the city, literally transforming himself into an "urban nightmare" for criminals. Then writers Robbins and O'Neil created new villains to help push this new, dark, mythology along even further.

Inspired by Batman, natural history curator, Kirk Langstrom, injected himself with a serum and became Man-Bat, one of Batman's more

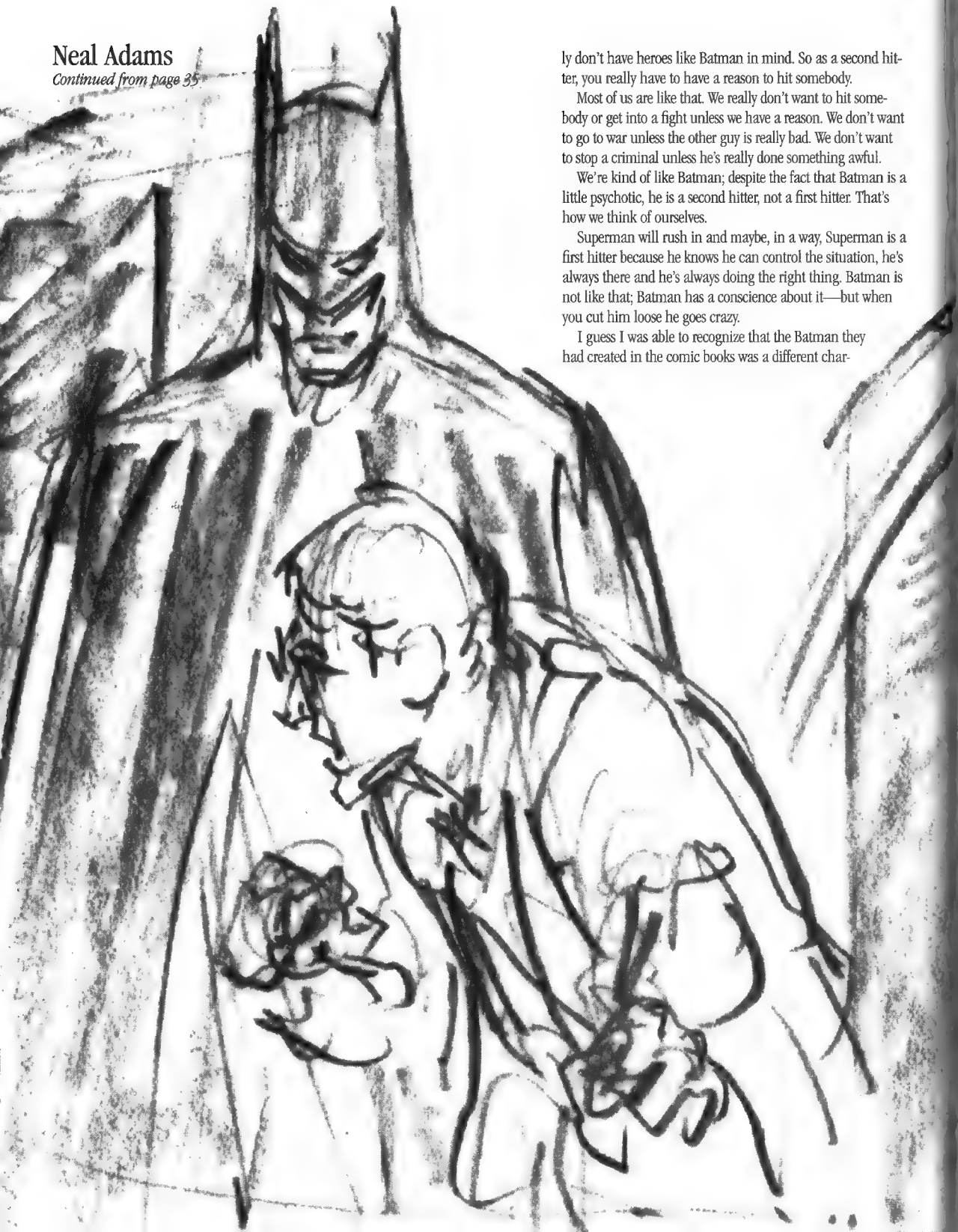
tragic foes. The other villain created during this period was to become a mainstay for the Caped Crusader. Ras' Al Ghul, which is Arabic for "Demon Head," came next into Batman's life in *Batman* #232. His goal (besides trying to fix his daughter, Talia, up with the Darknight Detective), was to destroy the world so that he may recreate it in a more perfect form.

A multi-part story in *Batman* #240-46 deals with this theme, and almost reads like an adventure novel that would have done Alistair Maclean or Jack Higgins justice. Certainly, if the Joker was not Batman's "Moriarty," then surely Ras' Al Ghul quickly vied for that honor.

So Batman had now come full circle in the three plus decades of his existence. From the Golden Age, through the Atom Age, past the Silver Age, and into the Bronze Age, Batman has embodied the pinnacle of comic book perfection and sunk to the depths of camp. From vigilante to children's icon… and back again, the character of the Batman and citizen Wayne is still shrouded in the dark nether world of mystery and revenge… and still excites new generations just as he did in the late 1930s…

Neal Adams

Continued from page 35



ly don't have heroes like Batman in mind. So as a second hitter, you really have to have a reason to hit somebody.

Most of us are like that. We really don't want to hit somebody or get into a fight unless we have a reason. We don't want to go to war unless the other guy is really bad. We don't want to stop a criminal unless he's really done something awful.

We're kind of like Batman; despite the fact that Batman is a little psychotic, he is a second hitter, not a first hitter. That's how we think of ourselves.

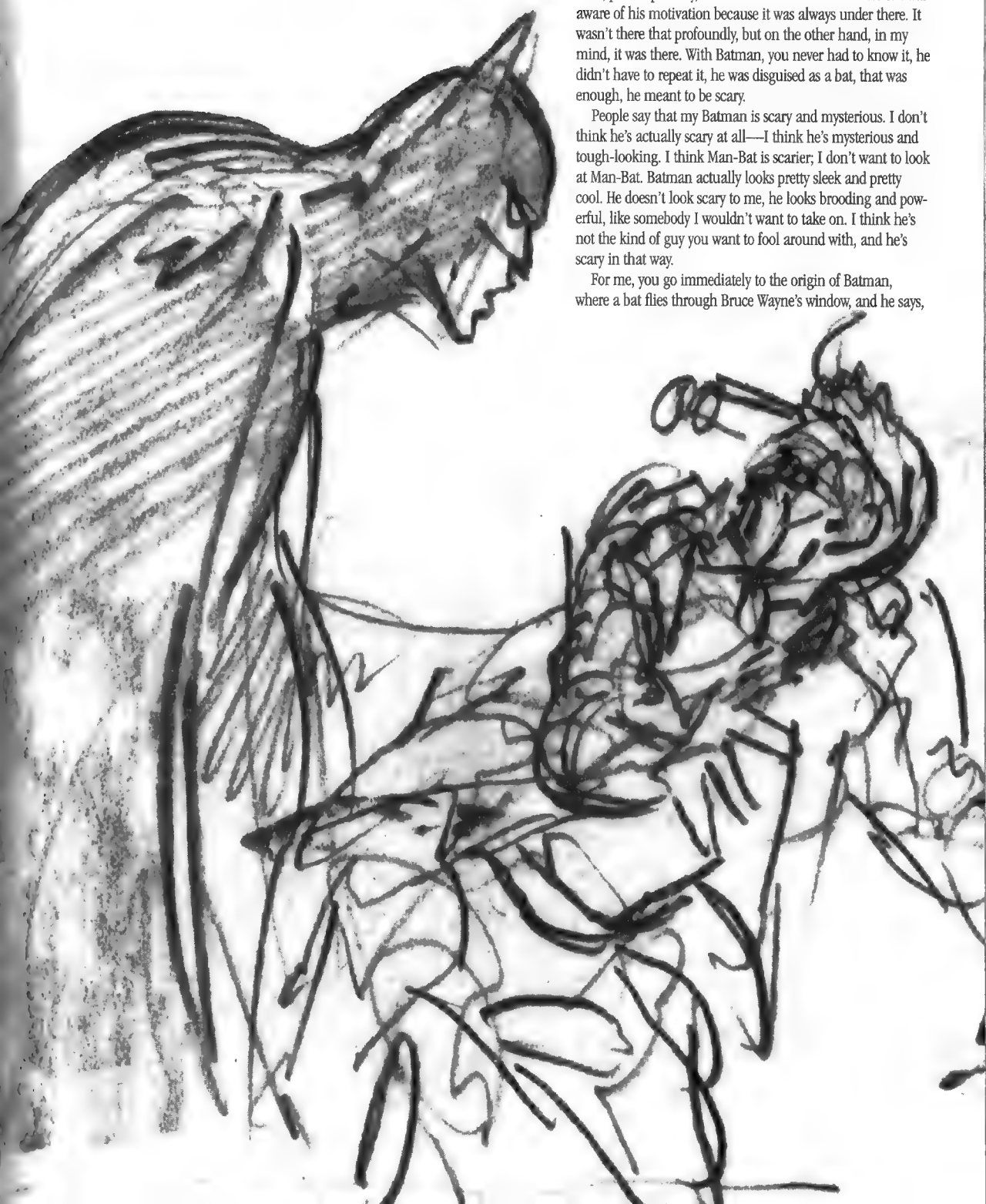
Superman will rush in and maybe, in a way, Superman is a first hitter because he knows he can control the situation, he's always there and he's always doing the right thing. Batman is not like that; Batman has a conscience about it—but when you cut him loose he goes crazy.

I guess I was able to recognize that the Batman they had created in the comic books was a different char-

acter, philosophically, than most comic book characters. I was aware of his motivation because it was always under there. It wasn't there that profoundly, but on the other hand, in my mind, it was there. With Batman, you never had to know it, he didn't have to repeat it, he was disguised as a bat, that was enough, he meant to be scary.

People say that my Batman is scary and mysterious. I don't think he's actually scary at all—I think he's mysterious and tough-looking. I think Man-Bat is scarier; I don't want to look at Man-Bat. Batman actually looks pretty sleek and pretty cool. He doesn't look scary to me, he looks brooding and powerful, like somebody I wouldn't want to take on. I think he's not the kind of guy you want to fool around with, and he's scary in that way.

For me, you go immediately to the origin of Batman, where a bat flies through Bruce Wayne's window, and he says,



"Oh, a bat… something to strike terror into the hearts of criminals… criminals are a superstitious lot." I don't know that that's not true. I find it hard to attribute intelligence to criminals; I think that they are a cowardly and superstitious lot, personally. People in film and television seem to write this incredible intelligence into an awful lot of criminals—I just don't think it's there. I think Batman is the perfect guy to fight these guys because he's just that much above them.

This is a man who, even though he is disguised as a bat and can surprise people, still is so physically adept that you just can't take him and is so smart as a detective that you can't outsmart him; he's so far beyond what a normal man would be. Only a guy like that could put on a costume and go around dressed as a bat and catch criminals.

In a way, I didn't do anything to Batman that wasn't already there in a primitive form; what I did was simply refine him. To be Batman, he has to be born in the nude, he has to be broad of shoulder, he has to be 6' 2" tall, he has to be stronger than your common man, and he has to be constantly training his body to be this way, masculinity training his mind. This is a very special man.

All these things I accepted in this kind of primitive state, I took and brought into more human terms. So when it came time for me to do Batman, I just tweaked it up a little bit. I just made him more fr[illegible]ue; I just made him stronger.

We live in the 20th century; there are people walking around who can bench press 300 pounds, there are guys who can run through 300-pound defensive linemen carrying a football; these are incredibly powerful and strong men. Maybe our comic book artists didn't live in that world, maybe they just weren't aware of it, they worked in their basements and really didn't pay attention to the world. What I'm saying is, by looking at the world around us, Batman has to be some an awesomely wonderful and incredible character.

In a suit, he's taller, handsomer, more broad-shouldered than a regular guy. How is it so strange, then, that he would be a playboy all women would fall for? It's very logical that he would be Bruce Wayne: Bruce Wayne is a perfect disguise for Batman. When I think of Clark Kent, I am thrown by him because he is broad shouldered and big and good looking and just happens to wear glasses. It doesn't seem to me that too many women would be fooled by that. Bruce Wayne, on the other hand, is disguised as exactly what he is: a good-looking, broad-shouldered man, so he's a really perfect character.

And Batman in his regular life does good things as Bruce Wayne: despite the fact that he's a rich playboy, he does good things with this money. The Wayne Foundation is a very integral part to what Batman is. It didn't used to be the Wayne Foundation, it used to be Bruce Wayne giving money away, but now it's the Wayne Foundation. That's very important to the Batman character because he's got to know that he's doing good. We all would like that.

Beyond that, he had Dracula's cape. I remember watching a Dracula movie with Christopher Lee, and there was a shot where he stands on a parapet and doesn't immediately turn, he goes the other way and then he turns; and in going the other way just a little bit, he puffs out the cape, and then he turns and the cape kind of moves with a life of its own. I think of Batman's cape that way.

I think if you're going to wear a cape, you gotta know how to wear a cape. It also seemed important to me if you were going to make a film of Batman, you would have to do every take of Batman 20 or 30 times, that within the 20 or 30 times the cape would move perfectly one time and that would be the take you would use—otherwise it would just flap around and smack you.

They never pick that shot, they never film at just the right speed and get that cape working. It's important for that to happen, otherwise the cape is very unrealistic. It's almost a fantasy—you really can't deal with it, but you want it to work, you almost want it to be computer animated, but you don't want to feel like it's computer animated. Within that framework, the cape is wonderful; otherwise you want him not to have a cape at all, you want him to be dressed like a gymnast who's incredibly powerful. You also want his gadgets to be wonderful. You generally don't like his belt because it looks too clunky, you want it to be sleeker but you don't know how you want it, so you settle for those little capsules. Nobody's come up with the perfect Batman belt.

I would love to see my Batman become the movie Batman. In spite of the fact that everything they say about the movie Batman is not

good, it's certainly the first movie Batman that made money—you can't deny its success. It certainly would be good to see a good Neal Adams Batman movie.

I thought it was interesting that the first year of the Batman animated series did seem to depend an awful lot on my and Denny O'Neil's stories. I think in some ways Denny fell upon Batman almost as a surprise to himself. It didn't seem as though any story that he would do, or we would do together, was so alien to Batman that it was no fun to do. He pulled it from lots of different areas. Even when Denny did a *House of Mystery Brave & Bold* with Batman (editor's note "Red Water, Crimson Death," #93, January 1971), he would sit and say, "My God, this is a ridiculous idea, almost a comedy," and "How can you put that together with Batman?" It just didn't seem like anything we could do, we could do wrong; it seemed like Batman was waiting to be opened up like a can. I would say that if we did 20 other stories, went in 20 different directions, it probably would have been as much fun, and very much what Batman is.

I don't decry what they're doing now to Batman. I don't really like the semi-historical, ridiculous "Elseworld" Batmans; I really wish they would stop. I had the same feeling when Batman got Bat Dog and all those other Bat characters, like Bat-Mite—that crawls up my spine. I think Batman would be better served if the company had more respect for the character. Batman has ideals. In some ways, we seemed to have forgotten those ideals, and certain writers and certain artists don't do Batman correctly. Batman doesn't kill anybody. Batman doesn't even maim anybody. Batman is very careful about things.

There's something about Batman that's in everybody. We relate to Batman. I relate to Batman. I think an awful lot of people relate to Batman. All of these things being true, to be able to draw an idealized form of what you'd like to be yourself, that's what Batman's all about. I got to do it, and I don't know that that's going to be easy to beat. People say my Batman is the perfect or ideal Batman, and other Batmen have been done, but not too many people have done it better—why is that? Because it's very hard to do it better than that. In another generation Dick Sprang did it, Jerry Robinson and all those other guys did a Batman for that generation.

On the other hand, there were so many people in my mind that were doing Batman incorrectly. I think it's amazing in many ways that Batman survived the 1950s and '60s—just barely. He survived for whatever reason I really can't even put my finger on—I have to assume that his origin, his basis, was valid, and no matter how much you stunk it up, it would still be a good idea. I think for the same reason, Batman became a hit television show, and for the same reason, Batman himself survived; under my gentle fingertips, he survived.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Arlen Schumer interviewed Neal Adams in May 1999 and edited the preceding article from a transcription of the interview. All illustrations are unpublished "out-takes" from *Neal Adams: The Sketchbook* published by David Spurlock's Vanguard Publishing (who also did *Tales From The Edge* and *The Al Williamson Sketchbook*). The *Sketchbook* features pencil and thumbnail sketches culled from Neal's entire career and is edited and designed by Arlen Schumer. *Neal Adams: The Sketchbook* is available in both softcover and limited hardcover editions.

Jerry Robinson

Continued from page 29

WM: *Do you remember how he reacted to the news of losing his primary writer and main ghost artist?*

JR: Well, I don't think he quite believed it was going to happen. That's an assumption, however, as I don't have a specific recollection of it. I do recall that we, Bill and I, both thought that it was an artistic and professional mistake of Bob's to allow that to happen.

WM: *Did he replace you with another ghost artist?*

JR: No. All the art was being done at the DC office now. Bob would hand in his stories that he penciled, which I would ink. Then I had the opportunity to do as many stories as I could on my own, directly for the publisher.

I remember some issues of the *Batman* quarterly which contained four stories in an issue. There was at least one issue where I did all of the stories, and others that contained either one of two stories that I did. Other stories of mine appeared in *Detective*. There may have been some of Jack Burnley's that we finished toward the end.

WM: *Did you know some of your successors, like Dick Sprang?*

JR: In 1979, I was invited to the San Diego Comic Convention. It was kind of a Batman year then, too, just like this year. The Convention committee kindly presented me with an Inkpot Award. Also while I was there, I was invited to a dinner. It was in a private house, in a garden, and there were a lot of guests including Dick Sprang and Charlie Paris. Well, I hadn't seen them for 40 years! I had white hair… (*Laughter*) Dick Sprang had a white beard and Charlie Paris had a white beard. I embraced them like long-lost brothers. Literally, tears rolled from our eyes.

Suddenly, Dick Sprang and I almost simultaneously realized that we had never met before! We knew of each other and had seen each other's work. Somehow with that common bridge of Batman, we just both assumed we knew each other through the years!

Paris, on the other hand, I knew very well. It was a very interesting reunion. I have a picture of all of us together that night, which I treasure.

WM: *Who were the other Batman writers other than Finger?*

JR: One was a real character… Don Cameron. He was terrific. He wrote some of the Batmans that I did. He also wrote Superman scripts. He worked right opposite me and had his own little cubbyhole. Don was a creature of routine and would come in very punctually. He'd put his hat on the hat rack and he'd sit right down at the typewriter and immediately begin to type. Page 1, scene 1. Whether he was thinking of the story when he was coming in to work, I don't know. By noontime, he'd have the story written. When the typewriter keys stopped, I knew it was time for lunch. (*Laughter*)

And we'd go out to lunch together quite often. We discussed politics, philosophy, and life! I was very intrigued by him and constantly amazed by his writing ability. Then he'd come back from lunch and sit down and start writing another story! He was very valuable to DC… but he had a problem… he was, regrettably, an alcoholic.

WM: *A lot of them were.*

JR: Yeah… Don really had a bad time of it. When you least expected it, he'd go out to lunch and wouldn't come back. He'd disappear for a day, two days, a week, three weeks, five—you never knew.

One day you'd get a call from the sheriff of High Point, North Dakota. "We have a guy here named Don Cameron who claims to work for DC Comics and his bail is such and such." So DC would send the bail, Don would get out and resume his writing routine. I never knew when he was one drink away from oblivion.

One time I had to do a story over a weekend. I had a synopsis and I needed someone to do the captions and dialogue while I did the art… so I asked Don if he could help me out. He said, "Sure, but we need a typewriter" which neither of us had. Such mutual assistance was not uncommon at the time.

Don said, "I know where we can get one." So we jumped into a cab to the 50s and Lexington Avenue. He rings a doorbell and this gal opens the door and they fall into each other's arms. He hadn't seen her in 10 or 15 years. (*Laughter*) I gathered she was an old girlfriend. She was also a writer.

Anyway, she wheels out this glass bar for this reunion, which I got very worried about. (*Laughter*) After the second drink, she ushers us back into her studio. Don sits down at the typewriter and put the paper in. I said, "I'll give you a quick review of the plot."

He said, "Got it." He starts to type. Suddenly, he falters—which I had never seen him do before—he goes on a little bit, and stops. I walk over and ask, "Don, have you got it straight?"

It still hadn't occurred to me what happened. He's staring and not saying a word. I looked at the typewriter, and it had one line of absolute gibberish. There wasn't one word that was decipherable. I took the paper out of the typewriter, and folded it neatly. I carried it around for years. I said politely, "Thanks a lot, Don."

Then I told her, "Don's inside. We're finished. So long."

Don had apparently been just one last drink away from saturation.

WM: *Whatever ever happened to him?*

JR: I don't know. I lost track of him. After I left DC, I never saw him again.

WM: *Everybody who ever worked with Mort Weisinger has a story. What's yours?*

JR: Of Mort? (*Laughter*) I'm sure I do, but I'd rather talk about other things. (*Laughter*)

WM: *Do you realize that you created the first atomic powered superhero in comics, Atoman?*

JR: (*Laughter*) That started when I wanted to do something under my own name. I was moonlighting, still doing Batman… we couldn't sign Batman because it was under Bob's name. That was the protocol. Also, I wanted to do something else besides the same old thing.

I don't remember how I met Ken Crossen, the editor/publisher, who put out a line of books. He had some good artists, like Mac Raboy.

WM: *That was Spark Comics…*

JR: Yes, that was Spark. He offered me the lead story in one of his new magazines. He told me who was working for him, Mac and the others. So in trying to come up with something new, I threw out the idea of Atoman, which he loved. I hadn't seen anything of the kind before, using atoms.

I think the biggest attraction, however, was he paid me more than I was getting on Batman. It was $50 or $100 a page… which was enormous at that time. I did only two or three stories. I remember I was in Florida, and had started to pencil the next story, and somebody called me from his office and said to stop penciling, we're out of business. (*Laughter*) That was the end of that!

WM: *Crossen created the pulp and comics hero, Green Lama. Wasn't he also responsible for trying to start a comics union?*

JR: I don't recall the details, but he was. We all tried to get it going but it fell through. We couldn't get the big names that would have had more leverage at the time. Crossen was a very progressive guy and kind of an early hero of creator rights.

WM: *You pulled a stint at Harvey Comics, working on the very popular Green Hornet. Was that with Meskin?*

JR: No, I didn't do that with Mort. The one who worked a lot with me on that was George Roussos. I asked George to do the backgrounds. Again, it was moonlighting.

WM: *Some of those stories seemed to be just Green Hornet radio scripts drawn up to fit the comics format.*

JR: A lot of them were. I don't remember if the ones I did were though. I didn't do too many.

I do know why I left Green Hornet. I was called in by King Features Syndicate. Turns out they had seen my work on Green Hornet.

They were going to launch a newspaper strip of Green Hornet, and they wanted me to write and draw it. They offered me a contract, but they said my contract also has to be approved by George Trendle. You know who he was.

WM: *Yeah. He was the alleged creator of the Green Hornet.*

JR: Well, he owned the property, as well as the Lone Ranger. Both originated on his radio station out of Detroit.

So they told me, "We'll make an appointment for you to meet Trendle, and if he okays you, we'll sign the contract."

I'll never forget this meeting with George Trendle. It was in his suite at the Plaza Hotel. It was a very interesting meeting.

He was satisfied with what I said and with what I hoped to do with the strip. I signed the contract with King Features, and we were due to launch the Green Hornet strip a month or two after that. It was to be a daily and a Sunday. That gave me enough time to finish up my current assignments.

Well, I'm off somewhere on vacation and I get a call to come to New York. It turned out that the editor of King Features with whom I signed had died! So all their plans were in abeyance. The new editor was flying out to see Hearst.

He came back from that meeting and said, "Well, it's not in the plans for the next season's launch." and they put it on the shelf.

And that was it. It was disappointing.

WM: *Tell me about teaching the comic arts at Cartoonist's & Illustrator's School in the 1950s, which became The School of Visual Arts.*

JR: It was a very special experience for me, those years of teaching. I really enjoyed it. Not having studied art, I had a chance for the first time to really study my art—what I was doing—and to be able to translate what I learned through experience and codify it—to convey what I was doing to the student.

I was doing my own work all day, and I taught from six to ten at night, four or five nights a week. So it was very intense. I had some students who did go on to make it, like Steve Ditko.

Pete Hamill was also a student of mine. He wanted to be a cartoonist. When my book, *Skippy and Percy Crosby,* came out, I got a call early in the morning from Pete, "I just read your book. I couldn't put it down. It was the best book on the comics I ever read. And I'm sending in a blurb to the publisher." Which he did. Because the compliment came from Pete, I really felt I had made it as a writer.

WM: *Did you see the promise Steve Ditko had as a student?*

JR: Oh, yes. Definitely. Steve was a prize pupil. As I recall, after the first year, I got a scholarship for him the second year so he could continue. I knew he was going to make it. He was very dedicated, very smart. He really worked hard.

When I gave him some guidance, he immediately tried to put it into effect and learn from it. I recommended scholarships when I felt there was real promise. It was very satisfying in his case.

Later on, when some of my students sent me examples of their published work, I felt as much satisfaction as if I'd sold something of my own.

WM: *How did that affect your own art?*

JR: I learned a lot through teaching. I think my work took a big jump. In fact I think that's how I met Stan Lee. I would get work for students when they showed promise. If someone did good lettering, inking, etc., that would be a good way to break in and I would call one of the editors.

I remember one year in the early '50s the class made almost $30,000 total, working in the field. So I invited Stan down as a speaker. He asked if I was interested in doing any more work. I was doing mostly book illustration and advertising, and not working directly in the comics anymore… by choice.

Anyway, I liked Stan very much. So I did a story or two, and I liked working with him—and it started another ten-year relationship! I did a lot of work for Stan, of all kinds. This was before Marvel superheroes of course.

WM: *Stan ran a much more relaxed house than DC at that time.*

JR: Oh, yeah. Much more! With Stan I did anything I wanted to do, in terms of storytelling. Unfortunately, he didn't pay top rates. (*Laughter*)

WM: *That was Stan's genius. He didn't try to control his talent.*

JR: Exactly… he gave them a lot of rein. I don't remember him ever saying, "No this is not good," or "Do this over." I did all sorts of stories for Stan. One time it would be a crime book, or war, or science fiction, so it was very valuable training. From comics I was able to go on to illustration, and anything else I wanted to do… because I could draw anything I could conceive.

WM: *In your later comic book career, you specialized in licensed characters like Bat Masterson, Lassie, and Rocky & Bullwinkle. Was that a hard transition from superheroes?*

JR: It had pluses and minuses. I did those things because they were new challenges. I did Batman for seven or eight years. It became boring to me. In fact, this was true even when I was doing a newspaper strip. I almost was afraid it would become *too* successful, because you wouldn't want to do anything else. It's hard to walk away from a couple of thousand dollars a week. Even when I did *Jet Scott*, which was a daily and Sunday science fiction strip. I don't know if you ever heard about that.

WM: *I have. It was written by Sheldon Stark, a science writer.*

JR: He wrote for the movies, too. He was not experienced in comic strips but he had some interesting ideas. A problem was to write a story in sequence from Sunday to Sunday that could stand alone, and also run daily and Sunday, and have it all make sense. A lot of writers had difficulty with that kind of continuity.

I didn't have a day off in two years! It was a back-breaking job. We started off in 75 papers (including the Herald Tribune in New York) and had very good reviews. But even then I was fearful of too great a success, and worried that I couldn't leave if I wanted to.

Jerry Robinson

WM: *What do you remember of your time at Western?*

JR: I liked drawing Bat Masterson because I loved westerns and I had the opportunity to draw a lot of interesting things… like the western landscape, the old bars and whatnot. Lassie, I hated. I really didn't like doing that at all.

WM: *Why not?*

JR: It was just boring… very boring stories. The repetition of that darn dog. I spent more time trying to figure out how *not* to draw Lassie than to draw her. If Lassie had to run through a field, I would have her run through a field of tall grass where you saw just her tail. (*Laughter*)

WM: *And no editor complained?*

JR: No. I put in enough to keep the editors happy.

WM: *Tell me how you got justice for Siegel and Shuster. That must have been very satisfying. Their story is tragic beyond belief.*

JR: It was incredible. I would get Christmas cards every year, thanking me for saving their lives. They felt human again. I got resolutions passed by the National Cartoonists' Society, the Association of Editorial Cartoonists, the Magazine Guild, and The Writer's Guild. They were all wonderfully cooperative. Neal Adams worked with me and marshalled the comic book people.

When it came to negotiating, we let Time Warner know it was going to get the worst press in the world if they didn't make some sort of a reasonable settlement… and Siegel and Shuster were destitute at the time.

Jerry and Joe were here in New York, but they had to go back to California. They couldn't stand the tension. Jerry had already suffered a heart attack. He called me the night before what was to be the last session saying, "Just settle it at the best terms you can." He couldn't last any longer.

Jay Emmett was then vice president of Time Warner. We were dealing with a different generation than the original DC owners. I doubt if we could have made a deal with them (the original owners). The other leverage was the first *Superman* movie was going to be released. And we made sure they knew we could generate a whole lot of media coverage showing the plight of Siegel and Shuster.

Well, in the last negotiating session, they offered Jerry and Joe a yearly pension and other benefits, but said they couldn't get a credit line in the movie because the contracts had already been signed. Well, I knew that could be changed. So in a midnight call, I told Jay Emmett that wouldn't do. We'd have to have the byline restored on the books and on all films. This was important to restore their self-esteem. He said he'd call me back. I was worried about that. What if they walked away? What if I had made a mistake? But when he called me about 2:00 AM, we had our deal.

WM: *It was amazing that Siegel and Shuster got such a raw deal, and Bob Kane got such a good one on Batman.*

JR: Well, Bob profited from the Siegel and Shuster deal. When they restored Siegel and Shuster's byline, they also restored Bob Kane's. I was delighted that Bob got what he did. He deserved it. He, as well as Siegel and Shuster, should have been millionaires many times over. And I should have been a half millionaire. (*Laughter*)

WM: *You seem to have had a very varied career, from comic books to running your own syndicate. But the thing you will always be remembered for is the thing you started off doing—Batman, Robin, and the Joker. How do you feel about it looking back?*

JR: I wouldn't trade it for anything. It's been a wonderful career. I've traveled around the world to more than 40 countries.

A special pleasure for me is that my son, Jens, after earning a masters degree in international relations and a law degree, decided that all of this was much more interesting and joined the syndicate as Editor. Today CWS is a division of CartoonArts International, devoted to the syndication, publishing and sale of all genres of cartoon art. Of course, we are in cyberspace—www.cartoonweb.com.

I've always loved the art form and I've tried to promote it. In addition to Siegel and Shuster, copyright/trademark/libel, and human rights cases, I've been involved in some other very satisfying creator rights battles. I hope that's the kind of thing that fans remember about me.

WM: *You don't regret not having created a mega-character like a Superman or a Batman? It sounds almost like you avoided getting too successful?*

JR: I can't say I avoided it because if you're doing the best you're doing on a job, and are excited about it, something good usually happens. To create a mega-character is a combination of timing and luck. A Batman or Superman doesn't come along but once in a century, perhaps.

But I did create the Joker, and I'm satisfied with that. After all… I made $40,000,000 for Jack Nicholson. (*Laughter*).

WM: *What led to your career as a political cartoonist?*

JR: I was always interested in politics. My earliest memory was of my mother campaigning for FDR. I jumped at the opportunity when the Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate offered me a contract and wound up doing a daily political cartoon for over 30 years with *Still Life* which became *life with robinson*. Technically I'm on a sabbatical—for five years now!

WM: *Looking back, what are your most enduring memories?*

JR: An interview like this brings back a flood of images—some just funny—some meaningful…. In 1942, painting a Batman mural on the wall of a country bar in pre-Castro Cuba… and in 1997 painting a Batman on the wall in one of the worst favella's in Rio de Janeiro…. In the 1950s and '60s, together with other cartoonists, among them Bill Holman (Smokey Stover), Fred Harman (Red Ryder), Tony DiPreta (Joe Palooka) and Wilson McCoy (The Phantom), entertaining GIs throughout Europe, Africa and the Far East… once on the side of a hill at the front line, the DMZ, in Korea and once at an advance radar base in the Moroccan desert. They were unforgettable experiences.

WM: *What do you look forward to?*

JR: Continuing my career as a tennis player and beating Mike Wallace for another 25 years!

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THE MICHAEL NAIMAN REPORT

The Mile High of Pulp Collections

With the prices soaring on high grade, tough-to-find books, the average Joe-completest collector is close to being priced out of the marketplace. What's a person to do? Easy. There's plenty of ways to satisfy that collecting habit we all enjoy. You just have to look a little harder and do some homework. Way back in issue #59 of CBM (May 1998) David W. Smith of Fantasy Illustrated had a smashing article on the graphic similarities between comic books and pulps. Pointing out that the pulps were the forebearers of the comic book, the article had many remarkable photos that several collectors have never seen. Ever since this issue hit the stands, the pulp market has heated up big time. Many comic book fans are now inundating the online auction houses and searching the used bookstores for these breathtakingly beautiful collectibles.

I gave Dave a call recently and he had a real bombshell to drop on my ears. It appears that he has recently been one of the parties to purchase what might be characterized as the "Mile High Collection" of pulps that he has christened "The Yakima Collection." According to Dave, "A single collector living in the Yakima area bought the pulps at the time of publication and then carefully stored them in individually crafted wooden boxes, which may account for the distinctively high page quality. The pages are undeniably white, cover gloss is at 90-100%, and most issues can easily be considered the finest copies known."

This collection is setting a new standard in pulp grading. Some of the titles include Amazing, Astonishing, Comet, Dime Mystery, Dynamic SF, Horror Stories, Out of this World, The Shadow, Stirring Science, Thrilling Mystery, Thrilling Wonder, Unknown, and Weird Tales.

According to other knowledgeable sources, approximately 85% of the books in this collection have a store stamp from five different locations—Waterbury's, Magazine Mart, Used Magazines, Churchill's, and Groves. The collection apparently passed through an estate to two heirs who divided the books into four groups. The majority of the collection is what comic book collectors would call VF/NM to NM. The page quality is what has set these books apart from all others. When compared to many comics being offered today, these appear to be real bargains!

Another sector of the marketplace that has seen some vigorous enthusiasm and is one that is frequently overlooked is Bill Woggon's Katy Keene (Archie). The series that has shown some real action of late. One reason why this genre may have shown some movement recently is because this entire run is also sought by crossover collectors who specialize in paper doll products.

Legions of "Katyites" are stalking eBay and pouring over convention dealers back issues and snatching up anything they can. I have noticed however, that the books that really move are those that have the pinups which are still complete. Books that have been cut up just don't move at all. These books were 'interactive' long before the word became a part of our computer-based lives. The Katy Keene comic book had fans writing in, making their artistic fantasy fashion suggestions, and having their pictures published long before organized fandom jumped on the superhero bandwagon.

Most of the KK stories catered to the fantasies of young girls—the fantasy of fairytales, literature, movies and love. Although Katy might not appeal to some of today's "headlight" collectors (Katy was rendered differently than your run-of-the-mill good girl styles) she's still great! In fact, I don't think she can be categorized as "good girl art." Instead of being provocative, Katy was drawn with a controlled sense of poise and expression. This was not the place (or time period) for any sexual improprieties. No cleavage, dental floss underwear or thigh flashing here! Fashion was the *(Cont. on page 66)*

MARKET REPORTS

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We've just finished up our third auction and bidding was quite vigorous on many of the high grade books. Of the many pieces of original art that were sold, Jim Steranko's Shield #1 cover art (which sold for $17,600) received a tremendous response.

Other winning bids included: Action #52 MT (Mile High) $7,700, #21 VF (Larson) $3,135; Adventure #240 NM/NM+ $770; All Winners #2 (Big Apple) FN $1100; All Star #38 NM $2,145; Amazing Fantasy #15 FN-/FN $2,420; Captain America #57 NM- $825 (Big Apple); All Select #8 FN/VF $660 (Big Apple); Exciting Comics #58 NM-/NM $440 (Big Apple); More Fun #46 double cover FN/FN+ inside cov. NM $2,420; Atomic Spy NM (Mile High) $990; Smash #8 NM (Mile High) $1,155; Our Gang #1 (Denver) VF $825; NY World's Fair FN- (Larson) $2,145; Secret Origins Annual #1 NM/NM+ $660.

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Comic books and other collectibles from the Platinum Age are coming out of hiding and selling here! Material is easy to sell on the Internet... although the condition is usually suspect. It is clear that new buyers have entered the field and all prices are definitely going up, up, and away.

◆◆ CBM MarketWatch ◆◆

A report of market indicator sales (including % of Guide) by Michael Naiman

Action
#49 VG- ..... $140 ..... 72%
#52 AppGD ..... $184 ..... 87%
#118 FN ..... $110 ..... 72%
#178 FN- ..... $75 ..... 69%

Adventure
#210 GD ..... $250 ..... 1.08X
#289 VF ..... $40 ..... 73%

Adventure into Terror
#24 VF Big Apple $49 ..... 67%

All Star
#5 AppFN ..... $540 ..... 44%

All Surprise
#1 FN+ ..... $76 ..... Guide

All True Crime
#31 VG ..... $75 ..... 94%

Amazing Fantasy
#15 FN ..... $3,000 ..... 97%

Amazing Spider-Man
#4 VF ..... $885 ..... 84%
#4 VF ..... $175 ..... 45%
#22 VF ..... $93 ..... 39%
#100 VF+ ..... $80 ..... 74%
#129 VF+ ..... $106 ..... 1.19X

Astonishing
#26 NM Big Apple $1381.15X

Astro Boy
#1 VG ..... $70 ..... 85%

Batman
#6 VG ..... $550 ..... 76%
#13 GD+ ..... $340 ..... 66%
#18 VG ..... $350 ..... 83%
#18 VG ..... $600 ..... 1.43X
#23 VG+ ..... $350 ..... 96%
#49 NM ..... $700 ..... 73%
#57 VG ..... $130 ..... 96%
#62 VG+ ..... $130 ..... 1.07X
#150 VF ..... $75 ..... Guide
#238 VF ..... $70 ..... 1.3X

Captain America
#143 NM 25¢ Giant $41 ..... 4.1X

Captain Marvel
#67 FN ..... $54 ..... 90%

Catman
#58 VF ..... $850 ..... 2.39X

Chamber of Chills
#17 VG+ ..... $45 ..... 1.13X
#19 VG+ ..... $45 ..... 1.13X

Conan
#1 NM ..... $139 ..... 69%

Crime & Punishment
#1 GD ..... $10 ..... 1.14X

Crime Detector
#4 GD ..... $13 ..... 1.85X

Crime Does Not Pay
#62 VG ..... $15 ..... 1.7%
#81 VG ..... $10 ..... 67%
#71 VG ..... $16 ..... 79%

Crime Patrol
#13 VG ..... $925 ..... 88%

Crime SuperStories
#13 VG ..... $90 ..... 50%

Crimes by Women
#12 GD+ ..... $41 ..... 89%

Daredevil
#27 FN ..... $35 ..... 1.09X
#30 FN ..... $10 ..... 1.11X

Fantastic Four
#1 GD ..... $695 ..... 1.61X
#4 VG ..... $175 ..... 89%
#7 GD ..... $89 ..... 1.45%
#11 VG ..... $70 ..... 69%
#15 VG+ ..... $100 ..... 1.1X
#35 NM ..... $115 ..... 1.05X
#50 VF ..... $100 ..... 97%
#52 NM ..... $121 ..... 2.24X

Four Color
#178 (Mickey) VG $41 ..... 46%
#386 (Mickey) FN $40 ..... 1.2X
#570 (Mickey) FN $50 ..... 2%
#1000 (Donald Duck) FN+ ..... Guide
NM ..... $147 ..... Guide

Gang Busters
#1 GD ..... $37 ..... 50%
#14 VG ..... $71 ..... 44%
#33 VG ..... $6 ..... 46%

GI Combat
#75 VG ..... $40 ..... 1.2X
#76 VG ..... $40 ..... 1.9X

Girls Love Stories
#107 NM ..... $99 ..... 1.47X

Great
#1 VF ..... $350 ..... 54%

Hit
#3 VG ..... $200 ..... 60%

Human Torch
#5 GD ..... $93 ..... 2.37X

Inhumans
#1 NM ..... $10 ..... 1.25X

Iron Man
#1 VG ..... $40 ..... 74%
#7 FN+ ..... $19 ..... 1.54X
#8 FN+ ..... $15 ..... 1.2X

Jimmy Olsen
#10 VG ..... $49 ..... 79%

Journey into Mystery
#88 VF ..... $810 ..... 1.94X

Jungle
#7 VG- ..... $45 ..... 1.25X
#8 VG ..... $45 ..... 1.25X

Kamandi
#1 NM ..... $30 ..... Guide
#3 NM ..... $20 ..... 1.1X
#4 NM ..... $10 ..... 1.25X

Kid Colt
#84 VF Big Apple $19 ..... 84%

Konga
#2 FN ..... $33 ..... 1.22X

Love Romances
#104 FN ..... $27 ..... 3.6X

Mad Hatter
#9 FN ..... $225 ..... 9X

March of Crime
#9 VG ..... $35 ..... 54%

Marvel Spotlight
#1 NM ..... $85 ..... 1.14X
#2 NM ..... $110 ..... 1.1X
#3 NM ..... $125 ..... 1.25X

Modern Love
#4 VG+ ..... $110 ..... 1.28X

Mysterious Advs.
#6 FN ..... $50 ..... 83%

Mystery in Space
#4 VG ..... $109 ..... 94%

New Comics
#9 VG ..... $575 ..... 66%

Peter Porkchops
#1 VG ..... $29 ..... 48%
#3 VG ..... $10 ..... 47%

Planet
#57 FN- ..... $120 ..... 75%

Plastic Man
#2 GD ..... $49 ..... 1.25X

Pogo
#5 GD ..... $40 ..... 1.54X
#11 FN ..... $19 ..... 38%

Red Ryder
#89 FN+ ..... $60 ..... 4X

Showcase
#89 VG ..... $525 ..... 30%

Silver Surfer
#1 VG+ ..... $265 ..... 96%
#2 NM+ ..... $187 ..... 1.05X

Sinister House of Secret Love
#3 FN+ ..... $52 ..... 2.92X

Slave Girl
#8 VG+ ..... $125 ..... 1.1X

Sick Chick
#1 ..... $15 ..... 1.41X
#6 GD ..... $15 ..... 2.1X

Spotlight
#6 VG+ ..... $335 ..... 1.92X

Star Spangled War Stories
#80 NM Big Apple $8 ..... 54%

Star Wars
#3 NM 35¢ var $195 ..... 1.7X

Strange Terrors
#4 GD+ ..... $100 ..... 2.5X

Superboy
#4 ..... $117 ..... 45%
#12 FR ..... $42 ..... 85%

Superman
#2 GD ..... $395 ..... 80%
#100 FN ..... $488 ..... 1.07X

Tales of Suspense
#12 GD ..... $16 ..... 28%
#41 VF ..... $42 ..... 1.32X
#42 FN+ ..... $41 ..... 87%
#44 FN+ ..... $27 ..... 1.74X
#58 FN ..... $48 ..... 80%

Tales to Astonish
#32 GD+ ..... $331 ..... 84%
#57 FN ..... $99 ..... 54%

Teenage Romances
#82 VG ..... $30 ..... 1.2X

Thrilling
#54 VF ..... $70 ..... 56%

Tomb of Dracula
#54 CGC 9.4 NM $140 ..... 1.2X
#60 CGC 9.4 NM $140 ..... 1.1X

Torchy
#1 GD+ ..... $115 ..... Guide

Voodoo
#2 NM Aurora ..$810 ..... 2.7X
#11 NM ..... $435 ..... 1X
#19 G ..... $55 ..... 2.2X

War Adventures
#2 VF Big Apple $49 ..... 1.36X

Weird Science
#15 VF Big Apple $133 ..... 79%

Weird Tales of Future
#1 NM ..... $1,100 ..... 1.9X
#7 FN ..... $600 ..... 3.14X

Weird Wonder Tales
#6 NM ..... $5 ..... 55%
#8 NM ..... $5 ..... 55%

Western Crime Busters
#7 FN- ..... $70 ..... 83%

Western Thrillers
#3 FN+ ..... $50 ..... 2.22X
#4 FN+ ..... $50 ..... 2.22X

Wings
#13 VG ..... $75 ..... 89%

Witness
#1 GD ..... $150 ..... 1.02X

Wonder Woman
#91 GD ..... $51 ..... 4.25X
#98 VG ..... $76 ..... 2.81X

X-Men
#26 FN ..... $26 ..... 87%
#30 FN ..... $27 ..... 88%
#37 FN ..... $30 ..... 95%
#44 FN ..... $26 ..... 1.33X
#45 FN ..... $13 ..... 66%
#81 NM ..... $90 ..... 74%
#95 NM ..... $90 ..... 95%
#100 VF ..... $51 ..... 1.06X
#100 NM .. .. $41 ..... 55%
#117 NM .. .. $30 ..... 1.07X

Young Allies
#20 NM- ..... $421 ..... 65%

Collectors should note that the opinions expressed in CBM Market Reports are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Seasoned hobbyists are acutely aware that prices vary based on geographic location, time of year, and a number of other marketplace factors.

Continued from page 64

I sold a Pulver Yellow Kid gum machine, Variety I, for $2,500. Most of the Buster Brown titles sell for $100-300; however, when a true VF/NM copy surfaces, you can add another $1000 to the price. The Yellow Kid ice cream mold, which used to sell for about $150 a year ago just sold for $500. Yellow Kid pinbacks and gum cards which used to sell for $25 each in most cases a year ago, are now commanding $35-$50 each. A complete 8-page section from 1896 with the Yellow Kid sold last week for $500, as did issue #2 of the Yellow Kid magazine in fair/good condition.

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Golden Age: Esoteric titles are in demand with superheroes as strong as ever, too.

Recent Sales: Action #4 FN- $500; Detective #41 VG $590, #90 VF $450; Great Comics #3 VG $500; Namora #2 VF- $600; Prize #7 FN- $475; Science #2 FN+ $1200; Superman #17 GD+ $250.

Atom Age: Esoteric rules here, but most 1950's comics are esoteric! Matt Baker is still hot, but not on Fiction House titles (at least for me). Romance is climbing, horror is as hot as ever and Westerns are subdued.

Recent Sales: Nellie #9 VF+ $140, #12 F $35., 14 VF+ $80; Millie the Model #2 VF $300, #27 VF $75, #36 NM $80, #52-59 (as a group) NM- $550, #100 VF+ $100; Patsy Walker #25 NM- $175, #37 NM $40, #58-65 (group) NM- $320; Young Men #23 NM- $100.

Silver Age: High grade is still the king, but we are selling tons of low and mid-grade issues at Guide or slightly below (possibly due to the lowering of Guide prices).

Recent Sales: Adventure #288 VF+ $80; Alarming Tales #6 VF+ $40; Batman #s #58, #61, #165, #167, #168 NM- $90; Detective #s 318 and 330 NM $65@, #s 331, 334, 337, 348 NM $45@; Teen Confessions #1 NM- $100, #31 VF $60, #59 NM- $40; Teen Secret Diary #10 NM- $15.

Bronze Age: Seventies books are plateauing and there is much price resistance on any grade lower than NM- on the higher priced books. Scarcer titles are still in demand, and they are available, but at above Guide prices with most being in lower grades!

Recent Sales: Batman #255 NM $40; Chili Special #1 NM $50; DC 100 Page Super Spectacular DC-#4 NM $100, DC-#5 VF $310, DC-#6 NM $150, DC Special #1-6 (as a group) NM $300; Harvey #1 NM- $40; Rudolph NN NM- $200.

Memorabilia: This market is booming with Marvel Fan Club material leading the way.

Marvelmania Bumpersticker Set 1966-NM $150; Captain Marvel Club Letter and envelope 1945 VG $75; Marvelmania Catalog #2 NM $40; Marvelmania Thor poster VF $200; Third Eye 1971 Marvel Blacklight Posters-Silver Surfer "I'm Changing" NM $300; FF Floating City VF $175; Dr. Strange "Search" NM $50; Neal Adams Treasury #1 NM $75; MMMS pinback 1967 VF $75.

NAIMAN REPORT CONTINUED

focal point. Along with the creative fashion imagination of the readers, Woggon also pioneered a modified panel layout that would be copied decades later by other artists. Take a chance and check out this run!

Recent Katy Keene Sales: (All the following books had the cut-outs complete) #34 FN $49.50 (1.03X Guide), #41 FN $113.50 (2.94X Guide), #42 FN VF- $96.50 (1.3X Guide), #43 FN+ $110.50 (2.83X Guide), Katy Keene Annual #1 VG+ $125 (1.45X Guide).

My final topic this issue is Disney. (What did you expect?) While I've heard some dealers say "Disney is Dead" I've got another take on this. Recently, the marketplace has shown that there is very good support and demand for issues of Walt Disney's Comics and Stories under issue #50. Anytime you can find these in VG/FN condition, they've been spoken for at Guide prices.!

Early Four Color issues issues of Uncle Scrooge are bringing 75-80% of Guide in Fine. It has been my experience that these particular issues are near impossible to find in NM condition.

In order of difficulty I'd say that they'd rank this way. The dark blue covered FC #495 (US #3), FC #456 (US#2) and then FC #386 (US#1) would be the most difficult to find in high grade. (In fact, if anyone can show me an Uncle Scrooge #6 in true NM, give me a call!)

Jumping to the modern era, 1989's Uncle Scrooge #219 (first Rosa story) routinely goes for between $15-$25 in NM. All other Rosa issues will sell at Guide. Overseas, where Gladstone Rosa material is scarcer, it can go for above Guide and they'll pay the postage to boot! It is just a matter of knowing the marketplace for the Disney books.

While we know that most dealers prefer the higher priced superhero books, only the truly uninformed would suggest ducks are dead. There are far more Disneyana collectors than comic book collectors... and they spend way more money than funnybook guys... and their requirements are less stringent!

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High grade Silver Age books, almost doesn't matter what they are, are easily the quickest sellers.

Recent Sales: Batman #169 VF $65; JIM # 90-110 VF/NM 1.25x Guide; Spidey #28 VF+ $225, Annual #3 NM $125; Strange Tales #89 VG/FN $135; Tales of Suspense #63 VF/NM $210; TOS #58 VF+ $175.

Golden Age is always scattershot and relatively unpredictable, based on availability. The most predictable areas are the good war covers from all publishers, Good Girl Art books, and good artist books. Timelys are impossible to keep in stock. I'm convinced that they are at least 3 times scarcer than their DC counterparts.

Recent Sales: Action #54,#56,#60,#61, #86 G+ $450; Boys Ranch #2 & #5 FN $215; Gem Comics #1 VF/NM $325; Green Lama #5 FN/FN+ $150; Startling #34 VG $115; Terrific #2 FR $145.

Pre-Code Horror is not causing the frenzy it had been here, but is still a brisk seller.

Recent Sales: Black Magic #2 VF+ noc $235; Mr Mystery #13 VG/FN $275; Menace

#3 VG+ $65; Atlas pre-Codes too numerous to mention in this space (a lot of sleepers here - Atlas had a generally good quality, with the occasional outstanding story & art); Roly Poly #14 F+ $275; Strange Mysteries #8 F/VF $110.

1970's books Many issues from this era are not as easy to pick up in NM grade as once thought, and some issues barely turn up at all! The DCs are generally harder to locate than the Marvels, with the horror and mystery leading the way.

Recent Sales: All-Star Western #2,#5,#7,#9 VF/NM $60; DC 100 Pg #4 VF+ $110, VG/F $38 DC Special #3 NM+ $50; Marvel Spotlight #2 NM- $98, anything with Adams, Wrightson, Kaluta art; Wonder Woman #199 VF/NM $42, #200 NM $55.

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Our sales niche still rests firmly on the sales of low to mid-grade older comics. Our local customers prefer to buy reading copies. The requests for high-grade material outweighs our abilities to acquire those items. When we get them, they sell quickly.

Golden Age: Camera Comics #2 GD $12; Heroic #45 FN $18; Hoppy/The Marvel Bunny #1 GD $10; Manhunt #13 VG/FN $80; Monte Hale #39 GD $18; Panic #6 PR $4.25; Roy Rogers Comics #11 VG $18; Shock SuspenStories #11 FN- $42.50, #17 FN $46.

Silver Age: All-American Men Of War #50 VG $25; Amaz. Spider-Man #20 GD/VG $35, #30 VG $30, #121 FN $28.50; Brave & Bold #51 VG/FN $50; Fantastic Four #1 FR $400, #28 GD/VG $40; Incredible Hulk #102 VG/FN $30, #180 FN+ $20; Iron Man #1 VG $42; Showcase #45 GD $23, #73 VG/F $25; Lois Lane #71 FN $38; Tales Of Suspense #39 VF- $1000; Tales To Astonish #13 FN $69.

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High grade Golden and Silver Age are number one. Lower grade Silver Age keys are selling briskly about 10-15% below Guide here, if strictly graded. Demand is also up for low grade Silver and Golden Age is looking good.

Golden Age/Atom Age Sales: Baffling Mysteries #20 VF/NM $255; Captain Marvel #23 VF+ $425, #51 VFNM $135, #52 NM+ $250; Marvel Family #2 FN+ $255, #3 FN+ $200, #4 VG/VG- $51, #5 FN $65, #7 FN- $64; Tales of Horror #1 FN- $105; Thing #15 FVF $325; Daring Mystery Comics #4 VF/NM (Novia Scotia copy) $2,000; Detective #28 Apparent VF/NM (professional restoration) $4600; Sensation Comics #7 VG/FN $230, #9 VG $185, #10 VG/FN $230, #29 VG/FN $160, #33 VG $100; Sub-Mariner Comics #8 VF/NM $2,000, #39 VG $150; Wonder Woman #4 VG+ $325, #27 VG $150.

Silver Age Sales: Action #252 FN- (color touch & glue on spine) $200; Amazing Adventures #1 GD $90; Amazing Fantasy #15 VG++ $2,000; Avengers #1 FN+ $700; Conan #1 VF/NM $175, #5 NM $60; Daredevil #7 FN/VF $125; Fantastic Four #9 VF- $300, #11 VG/FN $130, #58 NM/NM- $75, #60 NM $80; Hulk #1 VG/FN $1200; Spider-Man #1 GVG $775, #3 VG+ $275, #35 NM/NM+ $230; Tales of Suspense #1 VG+ $400, #39 VG $425; Tales to Astonish #27 FN/VF $875, #27 VF+ $2,000, #35 FN $225, #57 VF+ $100; X-Men #8 VF+ $175, #19 VF+ $100, #29 VF/NM $90.

Bronze Age Sales: Giant Size X-Men #1 NM/MT $575, FN $80.

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There has been a high level of interest in Big Little Books. Probably 25% of all inquiries ask about BLBs. Pulp Magazines are another area of more than average interest. Most are focusing on the horror and science fiction pulps, with adventure/detective (Doc Savage and The Spyder) running a strong second. Fanzines from the 1960s are one of the most overlooked areas in the comic related field, this area of interest continues to remain very strong. These areas have remained relatively affordable and (especially for fanzines) contain many items much scarcer than most "big book" comics for a small fraction of the price.

Other areas of noticeable interest include horror and science fiction comics from the 1950s, any books published in the mid or early 1940s, esoteric titles from the late 1960s and 1970s, all the giant size books, romance comics, and a noticeable surge in interest surrounds Archie comics.

There is still an good base level of interest in superheroes from the Golden Age up through the 1970s and, in some areas, these titles are showing renewed demand. The adjustment in pricing on the lower grade range has stimulated demand while true and accurately graded VF and better issues remain of interest.

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The demand for oddball comics & related items remains strong! Most of these were "TNC" (traditionally non-collected titles), which sold mostly to the general public & not the base comic collecting crowd.

My stock is 80% superhero, which used to account for 90% of my sales! Last year superhero books accounted for 10% of my sales, they have made a slight gain to about 20% of sales in the last few months. On the other hand, non-standard comic items are very strong for superheroes. We have very strong sales on most giants, treasuries, digests, paperbacks, Fireside books, posters, promo items, ephemera, memorabilia, fanzines, foreign items, British comics & UK hardcovers annuals, etc. Items not listed in guides move very well.

Marvel Atlas reprint titles of the late '60s to '70s continue to be in very high demand. I consider the Rudolph #NN (C-20) to be the scarcest Bronze item, much tougher than DC 100 Page Spec. #5! All Treasuries are in high demand & quite scarce in true NM!

DC digests are very hot! Best of DC Digest #41 up are getting scarce and are red hot. Even low numbers often bring $20+ ea., with regularity on eBay! Many people are trying to complete Foom and Amazing World of DC.

The oddball craze has spilled back to the '60s also! Good sellers include; Fatman, Bunny, Tippy Teen, Capt Marvel (MF Ent.), Henry Brewster, Parody mags, etc! Selection is the key to selling these comics! Who says low grade doesn't sell? We sell buckets of them!

Dollar-wise, high grade still does best! But quantity-wise, low grade wins hands down here. (Admittedly, because many cannot be found in high grade.) I predict that many oddball titles in current high demand, are due for another big jump. Demand still outstrips sup-

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ply on the titles to follow and many are going for bargain prices. Dealers buy them at 100% of Guide and can easily be sold at 150%-400% (average of double Guide)!

The hottest titles of the last few months for me are: Josie & the Pussycats #45-74 (a Hanna Barbera item), Archies Girls B&V #320; Betty & Me #16 (suggestive cover); FF #110 (Green cover scarcer than flesh colored cover), Fireside books, Ronald McDonald, and Scooby Doo (GK & Charlton). Also hot are Many Star (Marvel) comics, and also all Whitman comics printed from 8/80-12/80, and all circa-1982 Whitmans with no date/no date code on cover issues. Completists want the pre-3/80 Whitmans, the DC Whitmans, and a few want the 1980's Canadian newsstand copy cover price variants from 1982-86. (All estimated 10 to 100 times scarcity of regular copies.) And fanzines are a market to watch! Even the cheezy ditto-zines of the '60s. This may soon be a boom-market.

The most overlooked area is popular culture character comics. Non-comic collectors love these and pay over Guide. In fact, they value these items more highly than does our hobby. Don't be surprised if character dealers scoop these off you at low Overstreet prices & then jack them way up for their customers. Charlton comics are selling better than they ever have! Most were printed with cereal box paper (literally), and are almost all rare in true NM.

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I continue to sell low to mid grade books without much trouble. However, I don't find as many customers for the expensive very high grade copies as often as I did just a few years ago. Mail order continues to be strong. Store sales are hit or miss.

Silver Age 1955-1969: Marvel and DC continue to lead the way. Now and then we will sell a Gold Key or Charlton—however most collectors are not willing to pay Overstreet for those books. We picked up complete runs of 1960's Dell-Gold Key titles Magnus, Turok, Solar and Space Family Robinson—it will be interesting to see how they sell.

Recent Sales: Amaz. Spider-Man #9 FN $250; Avengers #1 VG $300; Batman #155 VG $50; Showcase #8 GD $650; Superboy #25 VG $45.

Golden Age 1935-1955: Batman sales were strong this month. Other wartime DC and Timelys sell well. It is difficult to keep a running stock of those books. Many of our Golden Age books fall into the slow category as most collectors seem to be asking for the same few publishers. We find it near impossible to receive Overstreet Guide for funny animal and humor Golden Age.

Recent Sales: Batman #7 GD/VG $400, #20 GD $150; Detective #41 GD $375; Human Torch #23 VG $150; Four Color #16 GD/VG $600. That will wrap us for this month. We look forward to Sotheby's auction and the San Diego show as highlights of our summer. Hopefully prices will be affordable and collectors will be able to enjoy our hobby.

ALLEN JAMES

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Golden Age is in abundance at every show and more so on eBay. The only thing is, I see the same books on the same displays, show after show. The only Gold that seems to be moving easily are Timelys and later issue key books. Timelys have not cooled off one bit since the big boom a few years ago. Low grade copies sell and sell fast. The higher grade issues are a bit slower, but the prices are still too high over Guide on them.

Recent Sales: Action #79 VG $100; All-Winners #16 GD $110; Detective #43 GD$150; Fight #24 VG $60; Heroic #4 VG $60; Joe Palooka #46 VF $20; Jughead #14 VG $15; Jungle #135 GD $15; Kid Komics #1 F(LR) $750; Marvel Mystery #16 VG $400; Sub-Mariner #22 VG $180, 25 GD $115.

1950's Horror Books have slowed down for me. I think the high prices have once again run a lot of people out except the die-hard horror fans. Some books are definitely undervalued and scarcer than most Golden Age books and should be over Guide. What's up with ECs? Do these books not have just as cool covers as the other horror titles? The prices are cheap, the books are everywhere, and the stories and covers are great!

Horror Sales: Capt. Science #7 FR $30; Out of the Night #13 GD $10; Out of the Shadow #6 VF $150; Punch #13 GD+ $70; Red Dragon #2 FR $20; Strange Mysteries #8 FN $55; The Beyond #3 GD $20.

Silver Age is picking up... finally. I didn't

see any great enthusiasm due to last year's price reductions. I think now it is due to the inflated prices of Golden Age and 1950's comic books.

Recent Sales: Avengers #2 VG $102.50; Fantastic Four #4 VG $375, #34 VG $20, #36 FN $30, #41 VG $12, #56 FN $15, #69 F $12; Hulk #1 FN $1350; Pvt Doberman #1 FN+ $55; Showcase #75 VG $18; Spider-Man #15 VF $270; X-Men #85 NM $15.

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There's a buying frenzy for most pre-1955 genres, especially horror by all publishers and romance by Fox and St. John. The main exception to this bull market is MLJ, whose sales remain low. But we believe it's only a matter of time until collectors start snapping these up.

Recent Sales: All True Detective Cases #4 VG $24; Authentic Police Cases #18 GD+ $16; Beware Terror Tales #6 FN- $68 Cat-Man #11 GD $105; Chilling Tales #15 VG $110; Crazy [Atlas] #4 VG- $25; Crime Mysteries #7 GD/VG $27; Dagar Desert Hawk #22 FR $22; Dark Mansion OFL #1 FN/VF $38; Detective #47 VG $340; Diary Secrets #12 FN+ $60; Exciting #8 VG $100, #30 VG- $70; #56 GD+ $38.

Flash Comics #104 F+/ minor restoration $1,400; Fox Giant [Romantic Thrills, 1950] GD/VG $70; GI Combat #77 FN $58; Great Comics [Novak '45] #1 GD/VG $60; Horrific #1 GD+ $50; H. Torch #32 GD+ $67; Jo-Jo #14 GVG $60; #20 VG- $65.

Journey Into Fear #12 GD/VG $30, #15 FVF $80, #17 FR/GD $12; Jungle #21 VG- $75; LB's Susp. St. #15 VG+ $75; Marvel Mys. #82 GD+ $230; Master #133 FN- $38; Menace #9 GD- $35; Pocket Comics #4 FR- $125; Punch #10 GD/VG $85; Silver Streak #8 FR $80; Speed Comics #8 VG+ $75.

TTA #53 VF/NM $65, #58 NM94 $80, #62 NM95 $45; This Magazine is Haunted #12 GD/VG $25, #13 VG+ $100; Top Notch #6 FR- $40; Torchy #4 GD/VG $88, #6 G+ $95; Unseen #10 GVG $85; Venus #13 GD/VG $88.

Wartime Romances #10 VG $15; Weird Comics #19 FA/GD $55; Weird Terror 1#3 VG- $70; Wonder #16 GD/VG $70; Wonder Woman #95 VG/FN $30; World Famous Stories #1 VG/FN $20.

THE MATT SCHIFFMAN REPORT

eBay comes on strong!

Even the most ardent fan of market depreciation is having a tough time arguing that the market is still down. Most are more than willing to point out that market strength is back to mid 1990's levels in all but a few segments. There has also been a huge interest in the peripherals to our hobby with collectors looking to Pulps, Toys, Posters, Premiums, and other paper collectibles.

Golden Age: Are the prices and sales figures gathered online a viable source of pricing data? There are many out there that will say no, but just watch how fast a low grade Timely or Schomburg Standard-Nedor book sells on eBay.

Golden Age sales: Air Fighters v1 #2 GD $220; Amazing Mystery Funnies v2 #1 FN $210; Batman #1 AppFN $11,200; Daredevil #1 GD $750; Detective #38 FR $950; Headline Comics #8 GD $88; Jumbo Comics #4 FR $110; Large Feature Book #3 GD $285; Master Comics #7 VF $1650; Mickey Mouse Magazine V2 #5 GD $75; Monkeyshine Comics #1 VF $175; New Funnies #81 NM $85; Sensation #94 FN $125; Sub-Mariner #2 FR $250.

Atom Age: The market boomed and then the best books weren't available any longer. Dealers weren't too keen on selling anything that they couldn't replace and would double in value in a month. Many sellers were also reticent to charge many, many multiples of Guide to their best customers. Along comes the online auction format and everyone is suddenly OK with both. On the net, great books are coming out, new price records are set, and everyone has a chance at the stuff. Pre-Code horror and Fox and St. John romance still lead the way… and westerns too!

Atom Age Sales: Beyond #22 VF $92; Brenda Starr #14 FN $145; Diary Secrets #1 GD $68; Horrific #8 FN $110; Jesse James #1 VF/VF+ $165; Junior Comics #11 VG $200; Kit Carson #7 VF/NM $90; Love Experiences #12 VF $55; Out of the Shadows #5 VG $140; Peanuts #1 1953 FN $122; Real Life #50 VG $65; Roy Rogers #100 NM $78.

Silver Age: A new influx of buyers have entered the high grade Silver market. Over Guide for high grade Silver? How about double Guide for particular high grade issues! Low grade books are finding buyers too, but at a small discount off Guide. Marvel hasn't see this type of strength since 1993, and high grade DC hero books before 1964 are selling at multiples. During the SA lull over the past few years, die-hard fans were buying at depressed prices, also discovering which are the tough-to-find-in-grade issues. Because they did their homework, they have rounded up some incredible material… and at great prices.

Silver Age Sales: Brave & Bold #34 GD $140, #101 NM $32; Captain America #113 NM $80; Daredevil #1 FN $210, #7 GD/VG $45; Fantastic Four #4 GD $180, #48 VF $450; Flash #105 FR $98; Green Lantern #40 GD $50; Iron Man #1 VF/NM $410; JLA #46 NM $110, #55 FN $22; Metal Men #1 FN $78; Our Army at War #81 GD $250; Strange Tales #135 VF $48; Superman #199 GD $24; Tales of Suspense #39 GD $410; Tales to Astonish #82 NM $90; X-Men #2 VF $950.

Bronze Age: While this segment of the hobby settles down and collectors look to the obscure corners, others are completing high grade runs. As many have discovered, some of the toughest titles to collect are the humor, romance, and western books. What many are just finding out is that it is one thing to find the #1 in high grade, it is another to complete the run as many are extremely difficult. Marvel and DC horror titles continue to lead the way, with Charlton and Gold Key gaining in popularity.

Bronze Age Sales: Hse of Secrets #100 NM $18, #103 VF/NM $14; Dark Mansion #1 VF $65; Fright #1 NM $11; Ghosts #1 VF/NM $60; Jimmy Olsen #138 NM $20; JLA #100 VF $23; Lois Lane #118 NM $35; New Gods #2 NM $18; Outlaw Kid #1 VF $18; Shazam #12 VF $14; Star Trek #55 VF $17; Swamp Thing #7 NM $22; Tomb of Dracula #1 NM/M $110.

Continued from page 69

JOEL THINGVALL • NOSTALGIA ZONE

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The original art market seems to be rolling to a crescendo. and there's a market for almost anything.

Recent Sales: Irwin Hasen Green Lantern All-American splash $900+; George Herriman "Embarrassing Moments" panel $600; Frank Robbins Marvel art pages $30-$75; Todd McFarlane Incredible Hulk (no character on page) art $100+; unsigned Bruce Jones Flash Gordon poster $50.

Sales on eBay have been tremendous on low-end items. Fanzines, calendars, fan club stuff, movie and television crossovers sell VERY well on eBay.

I continue to see a resurgence in Harvey and Archie titles, too. War comics are grabbed up by a mail order crowd at above Guide prices in ALL grades. Lots of movement in later Bronze Age DCs and Marvels, especially in grade. The early '70's stuff has slowed down a bit. Warren Magazines seemed to have peaked, but Marvel (non-Conan) mag sales remain quite strong.

Recent Sales: Batman #5 FR $300, #82 FN $150; Blue Bolt Mystery #111 VF $150; Boy Com. #29 FR/GD $20; B&B #23 VG/FN $530; Detective #58 VG- $700, #88 VG/FN $230, #189 VF $270; FF #2 GD $250; Fight #60 VG $25; Flash #42 VG/FN $220, #107 PR/FR $35; Marvel Mystery #49 VG/FN $350; Military #14 VF/NM $600; Our Army At War #4 FR/GD $40; Star Spangled #55 VF $250, #124 VF $125; Superman #50 FR/GD $60.

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The following is a sample of sales realized at the Sotheby's Auction held on Monday, June 28th, 1999. (Prices include the buyer premium.) 97% of lots sold (426 or 455) for a total of $1,350,000 in sales.

Action #1 AppVF85 $46,000, #15 VF75 $10,350; Adventure #48 FN55 $3,737, #54 (Mile High) NM91 $9,200, #57 (Mile High) NM93 $8,625, #62 (Mile High) NM91 $10,925, #72 VG51 $1,495.

All American #16 VG52 $19,550; All Flash #1 FN62 $2,587; All Star #3 VG52 $5,750, #4 FN73 $1,265, #5 FN68 $1,035, #7 FN72 $1,035, #33 VF75 $1,725; Amazing Fantasy #15 AppVF77 $11,500.

Batman #11 VF75 $3,450; Big All-American #1 FN58 $1,725; Detective #27 AppFN55 $34,500, #33 VG38 $4,025, #38 AppFN66 $4,025, #39 VF82 $2,300, #40 VF81 $3,450, #45 VF89 $1,495; Famous Funnies nn VF84 $7,475; Hit #5 VF84 $5,175;

Marvel Comics #1 AppVF77 $19,550; Marvel Mystery #2 GD29 $1,265, #5 GD33 $1,955; More Fun #52 AppVF76 $25,300, #65 VF75 $6,325, #71 FN72 $1,725.

Motion Picture Funnies Weekly #nn AppFN+72 $10,350; Mystic #6 FN68 $1,150; Nickel Comics #1 VF79 $1,955; Our Army at War #81 VF84 $2,070; Superman nn (#1) VG49 $51,750; Wow #1 VG46 $690.

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All collectibles are moving well here. For the most part, Platinum Age books move well when available or if in a decent grade. Golden Age always moves well in all grades, but seems to have less resistance to price from most buyers if in fine condition or less.

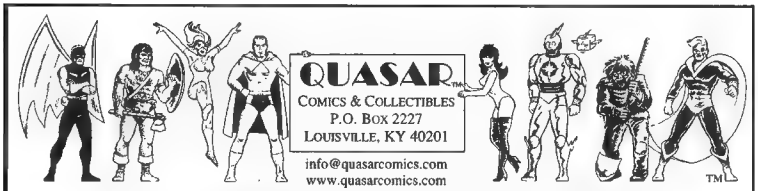
The spring has been very good for sales of Silver Age comics with many people continuing to ask for key and early issues of Marvels in all grades.

The Phantom Menace has caused major saturation of Star Wars on the Internet. At last count, eBay had over 13,000 items listed under Star Wars. One can only speculate that this large amount of material will cause collectors to become even more selective.

Golden Age Sales: Captain America Comics #67 GD+ $200; Captain Marvel #47 VG $50; Captain Marvel & The Raiders From Space VF $46; Detective #32 (cvrless) $255; Roy Rogers #1 PR $20.

Silver Age Recent Sales: Amaz. Spider-Man #14 FR (missing ad) $100, #39 $35 GD+; Avengers #7 GD $22, #11 GD $15; FF #27 GD$15.50; Sgt. Fury #13 VG $47; Superman #199 GD $15; WW VG $15.

Collectors should note that the opinions expressed in CBM Market Reports are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Seasoned hobbyists are acutely aware that prices vary based on geographic location, time of year, and a number of other marketplace factors.



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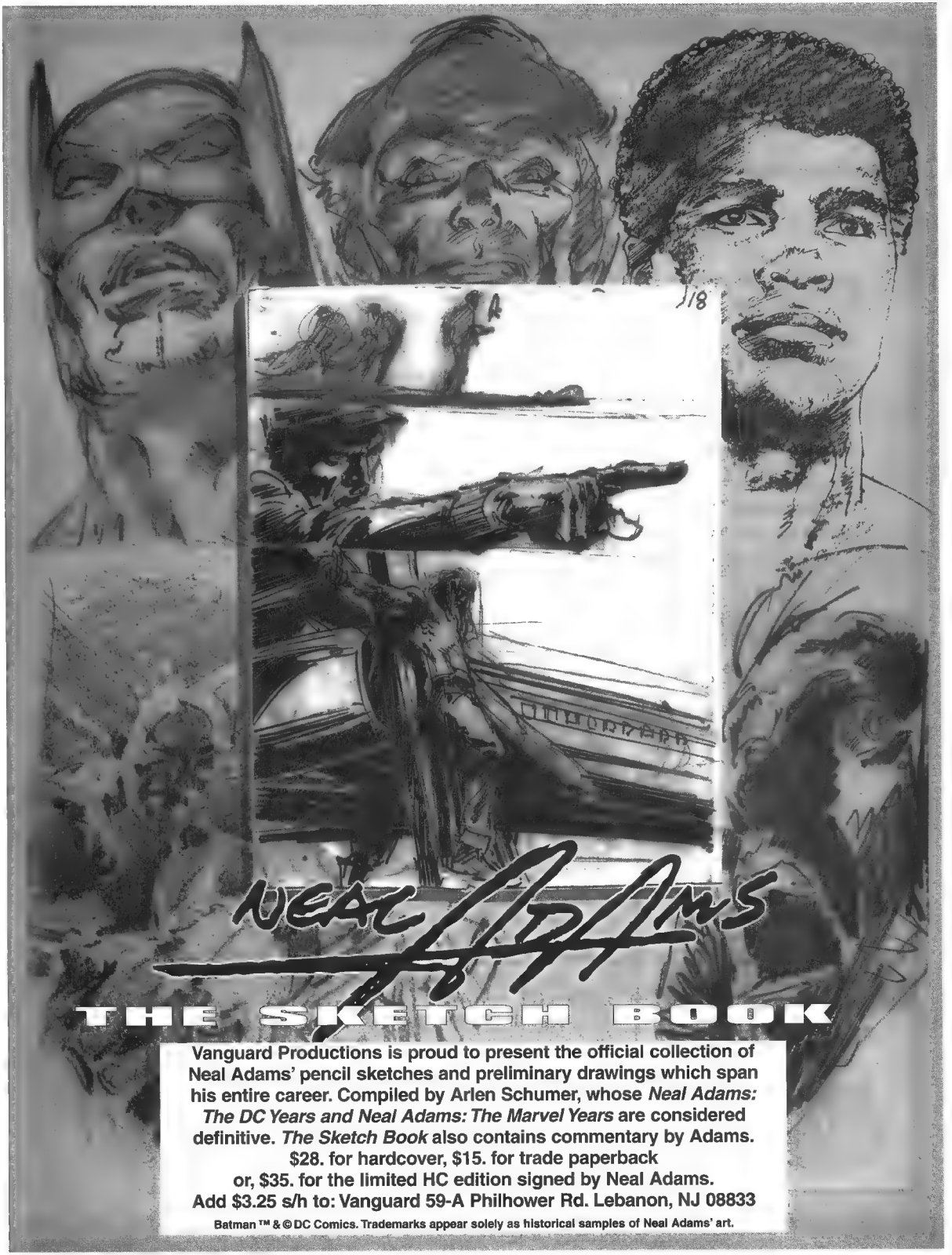

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MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 10

first exerted his power. Additionally, it seemed clear at the time (Summer 1980) that, to paraphrase another significant comic book, "nothing was ever going to be the same again."

Evan Pilchik, via E-mail

CBM panel?

Hello Gary and all the folks at CBM. I just received my copies of the CBM Special Edition (I had to order one of each of course!) You guys must have been reading my mind when it came to which stories you should include. Loved the article on Wonder Woman as well, that was one of the few issues I had missed. I was also happy to see the "Everything I learned about life I read in comic books" article.

Also, with the San Diego Con just around the corner, I have to ask: Is there any chance of getting together a CBM panel at the Con this year? I am surely not the only CBM reader that would love to meet the contributors to CBM. The last few years I have enjoyed the grading symposiums you have sponsored, but the time has come for the whole gang to get together. I would love to see some questions fielded about the great articles I've read in CBM as I am sure others would. Think about it. Keep up the great work kids, see you in August!

Grant Watson, California

What a great idea… and what a gathering it would be! I'll run your excellent suggestion by the powers that be and see if it flies!

Does it exist?

I'm hoping you might be able to help me with a collecting dilemma. Here's the story. Over the last two years, I've been trying to put together a set of the St. John digests from 1950. So far I have It Rhymes With Lust, The Case of the Winking Buddha, Candid Tales (both issues… did you know that the April issue is not pictured in the Gerber guide?), and Bold Stories (March and May issues).

According to Overstreet, there is a July issue of Bold Stories, too. I have never seen it, and it is not in Gerber, either. A friend of mine, who also collects these digests, says he has never seen it, either. For these reasons, I am beginning to wonder if the July issue really exists, or if I'm just chasing a phantom. Have any of your reader's ever seen one? Any light they might be able to shed on this would be greatly appreciated.

Oh, and keep up the great work on Comic Book Marketplace! I really love it!

Todd Warren, via E-mail

I never seen the July issue either. Give me a jingle and I'll put you in contact with some collectors who will have the answer to your your query. (619) 437-1996.

Robin had to take over

Was hoping that one of your readers could help me to identify a Batman story. It is mentioned in The Steranko History of Comics Volume One, page 44. To quote Steranko: "Batman was constantly being injured. In one tale, a crook, suspicious of being followed, noticed the caped crusader's wet footprints leading to the trunk of his car. The thug emptied his revolver into it. It was sure to be a trick. It wasn't. Robin had to take over the case." I've been wanting to read this story for a long time and would appreciate any help in locating what issue it appeared in. Thanks a lot and I enjoy your magazine.

Keep up the good work.

David Loesch, via E-mail

Before they become legends

I'm a 28 year old Spanish comic fan, fanzine editor, and collector and a faithful reader of CBM since two years ago. I think it's great, hence these lines thanking you for your work.

I'm less interested in "technical" aspects of collecting, grading, market, etc... and more

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interested in historic articles on old series, mainly of superheroes, which are what I prefer, so the idea of a CBM special with articles from old issues I think is just great!

I want to encourage interviews on Golden and Silver Age living legends before... they become plainly "legends." Later we'll regret not having asked them about this or that.

That's all for now, keep up this terrific work!!

Pedro Angosto, via E-mail

John Doe mystery... solved!

Just a quick note on CBM #67. I got this one way late and just read it. My letter was signed "John Doe" via E-mail. You must have lost the name and wanted to publish the letter. If so, the mystery is solved... I'm John Doe. I did want to say I meant every word I said and am not ashamed to have my name on it.

I enjoyed the issue, especially the Spider-Man stories! This is more a Marvel zombie-coming of age at the time Arnold Blumberg was writing about. The first Spider-Man I bought was issue #121! (I was 13 years-old.) How's that for a classic "Bronze Fan"?!

Thanks for listening!

Dwayne Wilder, Texas

The Perilous Paper Pukas

WHAT HAPPENED?!? I recently purchased a copy of Crime Report #1. I very carefully examined the book out of its mylar; spines, staples, centerfold, reflectivity... a quick sniff, and the haggle was on. The book was very nice—and we consumated the deal. I slid the book back into its mylar and carefully put it in my carrier with my other triumphs that day.

When I got home, I broke out all the books to catalog and read, but the Crime Reporter looked different! "Hey! Where did that faint crease come from? I don't remember those stress lines being there? Is that foxing on the back cover?... How the hell could I have missed that? "There can only be one explanation... Comic Gremlins!!"

Have they ever gotten you? I bet they have! These aren't gremlins like the guy in the bad rubber suit tormenting William Shatner in the Twilight Zone. Nor are they the little adenoidal character who plagued Bugs Bunny—NO... these "paper pukas" merrily slide in to our treasures and rimple them up! I think perhaps they are attracted and feed off the exhilaration you exude after making a good deal. Once they have found you, they revel in flurching-up your new acquisitions... then feed on the confusion and consternation you feel. Or maybe the gremlins cloud our judgment with avarice and greed as we acquire the books, then lift the veil at their leisure to totally bum us out and laugh.

How can we protect ourselves from these perilous paper pukas? What steps can we take to stop them from rimpling our rarities? (And you know how painful that can be!) What to do? Armor? Handguns? Scotch Tape? Bolo-paddles? We have to do something... but wait... maybe we should try to see the books as they are when we buy them—not as we want to see them. Maybe the thrill of the hunt and the targets of opportunity that show up suspend our beliefs on condition long enough to fall victim to our own grasping... maybe... NAH! It must be gremlins!

Stephen H. Gentner, Oregon

Roddy wasn't there

I just wanted to comment, rather belatedly, about issue #68 of CBM. One of the earliest comics I read (at the time I really didn't even make the connection that it was a magazine with comics in it; it didn't look like my other comics) was Marvel's Planet of the Apes. I was amazed to learn after all these years that Doug Moench had not even seen the last two movies.

The one thing that may have been in error, however, was the information about the begin-

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ning of the second movie (Beneath POTA). I believe I have read in several places that the beginning of the second movie was new footage and was not simply material from the first movie. If this is the case, then Roddy McDowall would not have been in the second movie at all.

Let me close by saying it was great to re-visit both the movie series and Marvel's wonderful magazines!

Matt Poslusny, via E-mail

Comic Book vending machine

Once upon a summer, 1967, if memory serves, I was paddling my bike purposefully below a lazy sun, ignoring the Mister Softee truck on my way to the corner drugstore. In due time, was my destination; I put the kickstand down and went inside. To my surprise, they had not arrived! This was Tuesday? Yep! The comics always came on Tuesday! Back on my bike and down the road I went.

Soon afterwards, I was in the local grocery store. No luck. Wait!—In a push cart, over by a closed cash register, were bundles of new comics! However, the clerk had not inventoried them yet. I waited. I wandered around the store patiently. Politely. Next, I reminded the clerk that he wasn't doing his job. Next, psychology: "There's a Justice League in that pile, I know it!—According to my list!—And you've got a paying customer!" Then, I thought about snipping the bonds and acting as if I had gotten my comic off the rack where last week's comics were. Nah, too diabolical. Back then there was such a thing as "truth, justice, and the American way." Okay, then, "I'm gonna go to your competitor and get mine!" At least he had the courtesy to smile as I departed.

Well, in my four-colored universe, with the exception of the grocery clerk (that slacker!), evildoers paid and justice prevailed. I went back down to the drugstore and there they were! There was a lesson to be learned, but I would contemplate it after a lot of reading, re-reading, a pop and a Hershey bar.

Nonetheless, Tuesdays were about to lose some of their meaning; there would be a rabbi under my Christmas tree, so to speak. The change occurred the day I encountered the eight-armed bandit at a five & dime. It was a comic book vending machine full of new comics. You put in your 15¢ (instead of the normal 12¢) and got the comic on top and you never knew what the one beneath it would be, maybe something you needed as well. There were eight windows and no window held duplicates of any one issue. What happened when you arrived and none of the eight windows had your comic on top? Well, you

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could see the stapled edges of each comic. "I just know that fifth comic down is an Infantino cover. It's The Flash, I know it!" This I knew because the comic machines often got their comics prior to those Tuesdays when the drug-store and everybody else got theirs. If the machines had not had this advantage, there would have been no attraction. "It's The Flash!"— 75¢, though, to get it. What if I was wrong? That was—uhhh—38 pop bottles! "No, it's The Flash!" 75¢ later it was Our Army at War. Drat! But wait—what was that comic three notches down? Gamblers Anonymous was just down the road. "If I could only find the guy who loads these machines." This definitely was a plot. Next thing I know I'm on the side of the highway picking up empty Royal Crown, Nehi, Choc-ola, Coke and Pepsi bottles.

One day, on the side of the highway, I found a box of Playboy magazines. Try carrying that on your bicycle's handlebar, while everybody driving by knows what's in the box, I just knew it! There was a lesson here—after some "reading."

Tony Smith, Kentucky

Still worried

Some collectors say they are still worried about this slabbing of books problem. They shouldn't, because it really isn't a problem. A small percentage of the hobby will avail themselves of the service, and the rest will be unaffected. Just like those who have a right not to slab their books, I have just as much right to slab my books if I want to. And if I'm more comfortable buying books graded by a third party, then I will gravitate towards those books and the dealers who sell them. Slabbing and third party grading is just a personal preference. Let's not jump off the deep end before there's even a problem!

Mark S. McHalloran, via E-mail

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MMMS didn't want me

Have a Merry Marvel Marching Society anecdote I would like to share with your readers! I believe it was the summer of 1970, August to be exact.

We always took our family vacations in August. This year our trip was to sunny Los Angeles, were we stayed with my mom and brother. They had a beautiful Spanish ranch on a street lined with palm trees and loved to tell everyone that they lived in Beverly Hills but it was really just Century City. I was excited about this trip, because like other previous trips, when we had vacationed in Manhattan, I had managed a tour of the Marvel and DC Comics offices. This time it was to be the LA branch of the Merry Marvel Marching Society. They owed me some Kirby posters and I thought this would be a good excuse to go out there and see the offices.

So Monday morning I called them up and told them that I was in town for only a week and that I would like to come out that day and pick up some posters that I had already paid for but had never received. The man on the other end was nice but told me that I could not come out today and that Friday would be better. When I hung up my uncle gave me a look and said, "They don't they want you to come by until Friday? Sounds fishy to me." I laughed and being the true believer that I was, told him that this was Marvel Comics not some fly-by-night company!

Our LA vacation was a fun week of sightseeing and family-get-togethers. We took the bus all over LA and found some book stores on Sunset Strip that sold comics. One was The Cherokee Book Store which sold Hollywood memorabilia and comic books upstairs. Wow, I was in comic book heaven! On my way up to the 2nd floor I was stopped by a Steve Ditko giant size Spider-Man splash page. An original art splash with a huge figure of Spider-Man. But its price tag was $20 and that was more than I had to spend for the whole trip. So I settled for a vintage copy of Simon and Kirby's Boy Commandos, for a just a couple of bucks!

Finally Friday came around, the last day of our trip, and my only day to pay the MMMS offices a visit, but I had no way of getting out there. My uncle was determined not to drive me, saying it was a waste of time. But I was not going to pass up any chance to see the West Coast Marvel Comics offices! No, not me. So I walked out to the main street and put out my thumb for a ride.

I didn't have to wait long before my uncle came down the road in his pick-up truck, angry enough to spit nails! The whole way there he went on and on about how it wasn't safe to hitch-hike in LA and how we were just wasting our time because Marvel Comics wasn't going to give me anything. Well, after a whole week of waiting, I was just happy to finally be on my way. Besides, I knew once we got there that I would prove my uncle wrong and finally see the place where all these awesome Marvel Comic posters and fanzines came from!

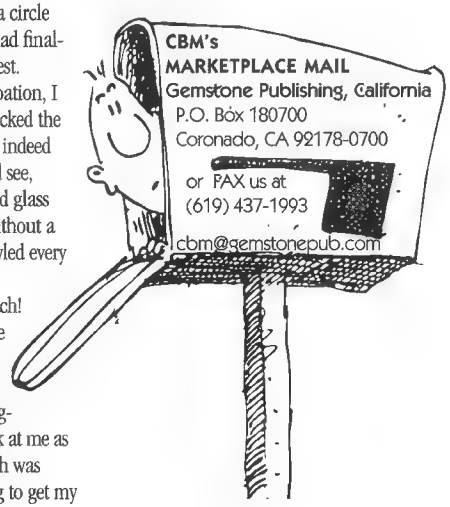
The building was in an outside office complex... each building in the shape of a circle with floor to ceiling glass windows. I had finally made it to end of my 2,000-mile quest.

My heart beating with happy anticipation, I found the right office address then checked the address again to confirm that this was indeed the right building. From where I could see, looking through the large wrap-around glass windows, there was an empty office, without a stick of furniture and telephones sprawled every which way, all over the floor.

My heart sank to the pit of my stomach! The only evidence that this once was the hallowed halls of the Merry Marvel Marching Society was a half torn poster on the wall, one of the posters I had originally ordered, of Dr. Doom staring back at me as if to say "Too late!" I didn't know which was worse, finding out that I was not going to get my posters or having to hear my uncle tell me the whole ride back that he told me so! I guess it was knowing that the person on the other end of that phone conversation had lied to me!

Howard Bender, via E-mail

My thanks to everyone who took the time to write in this issue. Your information, data, corrections, and opinions are much appreciated. Please note that CBM reserves the right to edit letters selected for publication for length and/or content. If you'd care to write, send communications to:



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CBM Forum

A perspective on the 1999 Overstreet Advisors' Conference!

By Vincent Zurzolo, Jr.

I would like to give you my take on the Overstreet Advisors' meeting held in last month in Timonium, Maryland. We were able to voice our feelings about the hobby in a constructive way that will help to make next year's *Price Guide* even better. We can all agree the Overstreet Advisors are a very passionate and sincere group who put our hearts into our jobs. Here's my take on the meeting:

Among the topics discussed were possible future price re-structuring, the effect of the Internet on the hobby, and CGC, the new third party grading service.

The overwhelming majority of dealers who expressed themselves asked Bob to raise or leave alone the price of '50s and '60s low grade DC's. Most dealers thanked Bob for his decreasing Silver Age Marvel prices and said they believed this helped to re-ignite interest in this staple collectible.

Bob was asked to no longer make brush stroke-like price reforms over entire genres. The advisors suggested that they wanted more meticulous care to be taken for individual books. Prices on secondary Golden Age key books in runs such as *All American, More Fun,* and *Adventure* as well as *Big All-American Book* and the 1939 *World's Fair* were asked to be brought down to a more realistic level.

Large price increases and decreases were scoffed at and said to create an unstable market. An example given was the jump in the price of *Mystery Men* #1 going from $2,500 to $7,500 in one year. Some suggested that this increase killed the interest in the book.

Restored books were noted to be in low demand unless priced to sell. Advisors wanted more warnings and disclaimers about values of restored books and modern books to be added to the *Guide* to protect neophyte collectors.

Every other sentence spoken at the meeting seemed to have something to do with either eBay or the Internet, in general, advisors seemed very excited about the opening of new markets and the increase in the collector base due to the emergence of the Internet.

Talk of near wholesale prices for common material and extraordinarily high prices for esoteric material was bandied about. The lack of a standard grading criteria on eBay was also spoken about. Many felt that product grade was misrepresented to a large extent. The effect of these prices realized upon the *Overstreet Price Guide* was mentioned.

Advisors strongly stated wildly high or low prices should not be the end all for pricing decisions but should be noted. Many concluded that the Internet is in a fairly young and chaotic state and should be given time to settle into a rhythm. A sentiment shared by all is that the Internet can and will be the future lifeblood for growth in our hobby.

The new third party grading service known as CGC, Comics Guaranty Corporation, gave a presentation about their company, product and view of the future of the hobby. They were very receptive to suggestions from the Advisors. They expressed the hope that certified comics will bring many new collectors/investors into the market. Many of whom might otherwise not feel educated enough to grade a comic book, but still want to collect.

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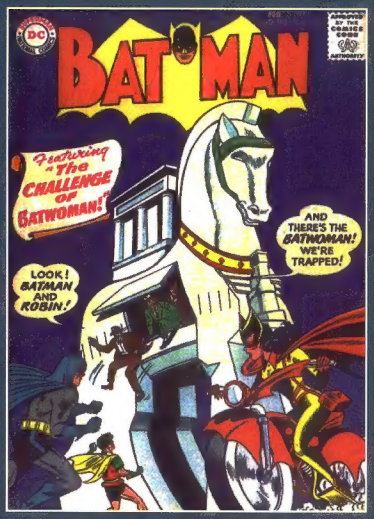

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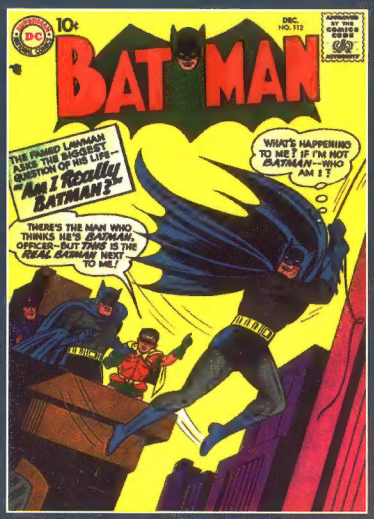
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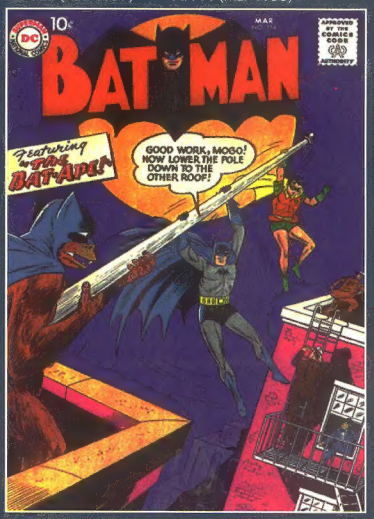

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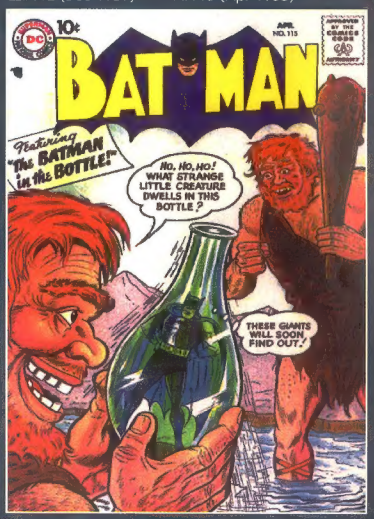
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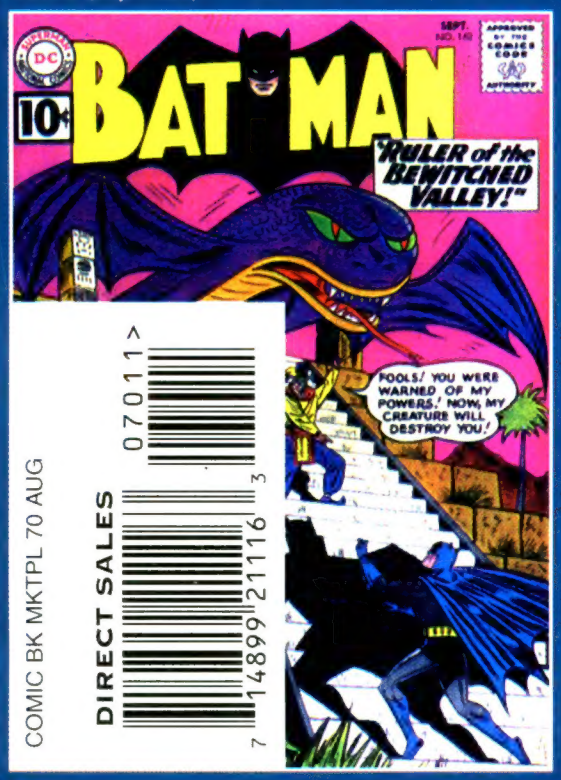

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